THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

The Screenplay

By Charles McKeown & Terry Gilliam

TITLE
THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

The title floats in a beautiful sky soaked in late afternoon light. From the distance, from the bottom of frame, spread across the screen, appear dozens of flapping exotic-looking flags. As the credits continue, they rise in frame, getting closer and closer. In the center of this procession, the perfectly circular open mouth of something bronze and animal-like rises towards us until it fills frame. We are looking down the mouth of a Turkish cannon. The credits finish as it comes to a halt. There is a pause, then the cannon fires and the screen is filled with smoke and flames.

CUT TO:

A RUBBLE-FILLED STREET where the missile from the Turkish cannon lands and explodes, blowing up a passing CITIZEN and sending other CITIZENS running for cover amidst a shower of burning debris.

CUT TO:

SEVERAL TURKISH CANNON as they continue to fire. Exotic flags flutter above them.

LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
THE AGE OF REASON
WEDNESDAY

1 **EXT. WALLED CITY AND ENVIRONS SUNSET**

A high panoramic shot of a walled city under siege. The sun is going down over the horizon, casting a long-shadowed glow across the blasted landscape. Smoke pours from the city. Beyond the badly damaged walls lies the city harbor and the sea where the Turkish fleet is riding at anchor. The city's fleet has been sunk in the harbor and the masts of its ships stick out of the water. In the foreground, backlit by the setting sun, shimmers the brightly colored Turkish camp.

2 **EXT. TURKISH CAMP SUNSET**

The Turkish camp full of brightly decorated tents and

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

pavilions. The cannon ringing the camp are silent. The TURKISH SOLDIERS are having a feast. Music is being played, sheep are being roasted on spits, a good time is being had by all and there is plenty of food. In the middle of the feast a TURKISH SOLDIER is gnawing at a bone. Having torn most of the meat off the bone with his teeth he tosses it carelessly into the air. THE CAMERA follows the bone as it spins upwards. It has just about reached its greatest height when it is caught in the beak of a nasty looking sea gull.

CUT TO:

THE DISTANT WALLED CITY as the sea gull wings away towards it carrying the bone.

3 **EXT. INSIDE THE WALLED CITY SUNSET**

ANGLE ON an EMACIATED MAN in the walled city. He points a musket into the sky and fires.

CUT TO:

THE NASTY LOOKING SEA GULL as it dodges the ball from the musket and in so doing drops the bone, which falls towards the town.

ANGLE ON the ground in front of the EMACIATED MAN as the bone lands at his feet. He stretches down to pick it up. As his hand grasps the bone other hands appear and snatch at it. A struggle follows which turns into a full-scale fight between a group of EMACIATED CITIZENS.

Moving away from the fighting EMACIATED CITIZENS we begin to explore the city within the walls. Tired, thin, and dirty CITIZENS grub around in the rubble for food or belongings. Some are tending to the WOUNDED. As they do so, a horse-drawn hearse rumbles past stacked with coffins. Many of the buildings in the town have been flattened and some are on fire. At one of these fires, a group of FIREMEN are operating a fire engine and carrying dead and injured CITIZENS away on stretchers. A group of armed SOLDIERS led by a mounted CAVALRY OFFICER march past. Some of the SOLDIERS are carrying a wounded comrade on a stretcher.

The SOLDIERS move on into the town square where we

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

find a huge bronze horse's head lying on the ground. A group of CITIZENS have taken shelter inside it and sit huddled round a fire.

ANGLE ON a huge broken equestrian statue on a plinth. The horse's head has been broken off, and so has that of the rider.

END OPENING CREDITS

The CAMERA sweeps around the statue and down to the plinth on which it stands. There are many official notices plastered on the marble base announcing the latest requisitioning rules, rationings, anti-looting laws, etc. Amongst these is stuck a large poster proclaiming:

THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

A TALE OF INCREDIBLE TRUTHS

RESURRECTED AND PERFORMED FOR THE FIRST

TIME IN THIRTY YEARS BY THE HENRY SALT

AND SON PLAYERS

Tickets available from the Theatre Royal.

As we are reading the poster, SALLY SALT, a small girl about nine years old, appears from below, scratches "AND SON" from the poster, and replaces it with "AND DAUGHTER." She then looks up at the towering horse and rider with a look of satisfaction. Behind the statue glows a crescent moon. SALLY then turns her attention to another HENRY SALT & SON poster further along the plinth. As she proceeds to make her corrections the CAMERA cranes up and away revealing more of the awful devastation of the town square — fires burn, bodies hang from gibbets; suddenly a great black winged FIGURE looms into frame, floating menacingly over the town. The reverse angle reveals the FIGURE to be a great stone gargoyle hanging from the corner of the ruined cathedral. It is DEATH — black-hooded, spectral, wings spread wide and carrying a scythe and hourglass in his skeletal hands. It almost seems to be watching SALLY in the distance as she continues altering the posters, unaware of its stony presence.

4 INT. BACKSTAGE DUSK

Muffled music of a seafaring kind from a trio of hidden musicians.

We are in a dark place filled with gears and wheels, ropes and pulleys. THE CAMERA follows the gears and ropes to a point behind a braced wooden circular object which is rising. We stay with this disk until we emerge above a braced canvas flat and look down across a stage into the auditorium of a theater. The auditorium, the roof of which has been blown off, is full of PEOPLE watching the stage. Many of them have sustained injuries in the course of the siege and are heavily bandaged. Others watch the stage from stretchers. At the back of the auditorium, around which great broken baroque figures dangle crazily, some of the boxes have been taken over by the homeless. These people watch the proceedings below them while feeding babies, lighting fires, preparing food, etc. As the music stops, a voice booms out from the stage and we turn to the AUDIENCE'S P.O.V. to see that the disk which we followed was a stage sun and that it is shining over a seascape on which HENRY SALT, dressed as BARON MUNCHAUSEN, is standing on a huge cheese island.

SALT
(tongue in cheek)
"And so ... as the sun rose over the island of cheese, casting long shadows through the sausage bushes, illuminating the tops of the honey trees, and warming the fields of smoked salmon, I, Baron Munchausen, who am renowned, first and foremost, for telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth ... "

Here there are laughs from the AUDIENCE.

CUT TO:

SALT'S P.O.V. to see injured SOLDIERS and CITIZENS in the auditorium trying hard to have a good time in spite of the pain of their injuries.

CUT TO:

SALT who glances anxiously towards a box next to the

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

stage as he continues to speak. The box is occupied by a group of official-looking men engrossed in apparently important business.

SALT (V.O.)
" ... bade farewell to my three-legged, horn-headed friends, and prepared to return, across the sea of wine, to my native land, there to attempt the education of my provincial, narrow-minded and stupidly incredulous fellow countrymen. For while it has been my privilege to encounter and recognize all that is most wonderful in this world, it would seem that the great bulk of mankind is willfully blind to all but that which promotes boredom, stagnation and dreariness. We heaved anchor and set sail."

CUT TO:

THE WINGS as SALLY arrives. She sneaks in as if expecting to be grabbed by someone. On a wall behind her is an identical poster to the one we have seen in the square. This poster too has been altered by SALLY, but someone has crossed out the "AND DAUGHTER" and tried to restore the "AND SON." SALLY sneaks past ROSE and VIOLET. ROSE is helping VIOLET with some aspect of costume or makeup.

VIOLET
How can you become a great actress like me, poor darling, if you get blown to pieces? Come on.

SALLY pulls back a drape, and peers onto the stage from where we hear Salt droning on. VIOLET, who is clutching a baby, comes up behind SALLY, grabs her and pulls her away from the edge of the stage.

VIOLET
(sotto voce)
Where have you been?

SALLY
Eating. Roast beef with potatoes ... Plum pudding with cream.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

VIOLET
(salivating)
You little liar! Where?

SALLY
At a banquet. With my friends. On the moon.

VIOLET
(lifting her hand threateningly)
Just behave yourself!

SALLY
You're not my dad!

VIOLET
The Right Ordinary Horatio Jackson's watching the show tonight, and if he doesn't like it he'll throw us to the Turks!

The BABY begins to cry, and VIOLET tries to quiet it, giving SALLY the opportunity to escape.

CUT TO:

SALT in the miniature galleon which is stationary in the middle of the stage. Clearly something is not happening which should be happening, and SALT is getting flustered.

SALT
(emphatically)
" ... We heaved anchor and set sail!"

SALT glances desperately towards the wings.

SALT
(even more emphatically)
"We heaved anchor and set sail!!"

SALT, panic stricken, glances towards JACKSON. Now there are a few jeers, shouts and laughs from the AUDIENCE.

AUDIENCE
Get on with it skipper! ...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

SALT (CONT.)
He's becalmed!
There's been a mutiny! ...
(laughs)

5 **INT. BELOW STAGE NIGHT**

BILL, JEREMY, RUPERT and DESMOND and whoever plays the Sultan are waiting for their cue.

BILL
(sotto voce)
We should never have come here. I want to go home!

DESMOND
(scornfully)
Home? What's that?

BILL
Food, safety, comfort.

DESMOND
You're the victim of a happy childhood, mate.

SALLY leaps down the steps from the stage.

SALLY
The waves, the waves!

DESMOND
Oh, bugger.

BILL, JEREMY, RUPERT and DESMOND leap into action as if electrified, but collide. Eventually they sort themselves out and begin working stage machinery levers. SALLY also works a lever.

RUPERT
We're actors! Where the devil are the stage hands?

BILL
Dead!

RUPERT
They can't all have been killed.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

JEREMY
Not killed, ducky, suicide. Nothing whatever to do with your acting.

6 **INT. ON STAGE NIGHT**

ANGLE ON SALT as the stage begins to undulate in imitation of waves. The miniature galleon begins to rock and also to move back and forth across the stage, accompanied by the sound of wind.

The AUDIENCE cheers.

CUT TO:

THE WINGS, where we find VIOLET with BABY laboring over a huge capstan which moves the galleon back and forth. She is simultaneously operating a wind machine.

CUT TO:

SALT, on stage.

SALT
(rocking unsteadily)
"But ill luck pursued me. I was blown towards the waiting jaws of a whale of such prodigious length that even with a telescope I could not see the end of him ... "

As SALT raises his telescope a great painted cut-out whale emerges from the wings. As its hinged jaws open wide, the boat and SALT disappear behind the cut-out. The whale continues to be trundled towards the center of the stage as ROSE and DAISY, dressed as mermaids, rise from between the undulating waves.

CUT TO:

JACKSON and his COHORTS in the royal box.

FUNCTIONARY
Are you enjoying it, sir?

JACKSON
(puzzled)
"Am I enjoying it?" I don't think
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

JACKSON (CONT.)
that's a question which falls within the parameters of our enquiry, is it?

CUT TO:

ROSE and DAISY on stage.

ROSE and DAISY
(singing)
What will become of the Baron? Surely, this time, there is no escape!

SALT pops his head out of the whale.

SALT
I have learned from experience that a modicum of snuff can be most efficacious.

SALT takes a pinch of snuff from a box and sprinkles it around the whale's mouth. He then ducks back inside as the whale begins to shudder and spout smoke and confetti from its blow-hole. SALT then rises (on a telescopic platform badly hidden by the plume) seemingly supported by the spray.

ANGLE on the auditorium where the AUDIENCE gives a patchy and lukewarm applause as the curtains close.

7 **INT. THEATER. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR/DRESSING ROOMS**

SALT storms into the wings.

SALT
(furious)
Hell's bells and buckets of blood! Where were the waves?!! The waves?!!

JEREMY, RUPERT, DESMOND and BILL are attempting, too late, to escape to the back of the theater before being caught by SALT. Now JEREMY, RUPERT and DESMOND push BILL forward and hide behind his massive frame.

SALT
You incompetent IMBECILE!

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

BILL
It wasn't me! ... It was her!

BILL points at the sweating DAISY who is slumped, exhausted, over her capstan.

DAISY
It wasn't me! It was him!
(to BILL)
You big pintle!

SALT
(exasperated)
We're supposed to be professionals!
And we're trying to stay alive!

Here SALT catches sight of SALLY, as she tries to sneak away into the back of the theater.

SALT
SALLY!
(grabbing her)
Where have you been?!

SALLY
Nowhere!

SALT
Don't lie to me!

SALLY
I'm not ...

SALT marches SALLY along the blitzed remains of corridors at the back of the theater. They pass ROSE and DAISY's smashed dressing room.

SALT
Don't you think I've got enough to worry about?

SALLY
I was ...

SALT
Yes, I know, playing with dragons! Wrestling with angels! ... Wandering mindlessly through exploding shells and blazing buildings.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

Here they pass a room in which DOCTORS are tearing scenery into strips to bind the wounds of injured SOLDIERS and CITIZENS. The SOLDIERS and CITIZENS are eating scenery and props (including wax fruit). SALT leaps in to try and rescue his gear.

SALT
(outraged)
Stop that! Put those down! Don't you dare ... ! This scenery has appeared before every crowned head in Europe! You Philistines! These are props for Anthony and Cleopatra! ...

The CITIZENS, SOLDIERS and DOCTORS drive SALT off.

SALT
I shall report you ... Oafs! ... Ignoramuses! ... You don't deserve art! ... You don't deserve theater! ... That's the fruit from Hamlet ... Go on! ... I hope you choke to death.

SALT, temporarily defeated, marches on down the corridor to the door of his dressing room which he unlocks, opens and through which we see his belongings, which include a portrait of the absent MRS. SALT, Sally's mum.

SALT
Now ... Stay in here or I shall lock you up!

SALLY
Where's my brother?

SALT
What? You haven't got a brother.

SALLY
(picking up poster)
Well, you just tell me why it says, "Henry Salt and *Son*"? I'm your daughter.

SALT
I should never have taught you to read! ... "And Son" is traditional. That's the way it's supposed to be.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

SALT's attention is attracted by a large theatrical skip which is moving, apparently of its own volition, towards a door at the end of the corridor. SALT rushes to it, blocks its path and flings open the lid. Inside are BILL, RUPERT, DESMOND and JEREMY. (The skip has no bottom.) SALT flies into a rage and drags them out.

SALT
Get out of there! Get out! You scoundrels! You traitors! Run away in our darkest hour, would you?!

DESMOND
Yes.

SALT
You weak-kneed, lily-livered ... yes?

JEREMY
(helpfully)
Yellow-bellied.

SALT
Thank you ... yellow-bellied lot! You give theater a bad name! You give actors a bad name! You give escaping a bad name. Where the blazes did you think you could escape to? Eh?

RUPERT crosses his eyes and points in toutes directions.

SALT hauls them out and beats them back towards the stage.

SALT
Get back to your dressing rooms and prepare for act II.

8 **INT. THEATER AUDITORIUM**

In the auditorium, the AUDIENCE is milling about eating crusts of bread, urinating in corners, discussing each other's wounds and waiting for the second act. HORATIO JACKSON, in the royal box, continues to deal with business and receive a stream of EMISSARIES.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

CUT TO:

A CLOSE-UP of the royal box, which is crammed with FUNCTIONARIES, GENERALS, etc., as SALT appears at the back hoping to speak to JACKSON. SALT hurriedly tries to clean the dirt from his costume, that came from the whale. JACKSON, looking up from a scroll, notices SALT and beckons him to come forward.

JACKSON
(rolling up scroll)
No ... the Sultan's demands are still not sufficiently rational. The only lasting peace will be one based upon reason and scientific principle.

The EMISSARY takes the document and leaves as SALT fights his way through the throng to JACKSON at the front of the box.

SALT
(fawning horribly)
I'm terribly sorry Mr. Jackson ... the first act didn't go quite as well as we would have liked ... One or two little technical ...

JACKSON
(pleasantly)
Please don't apologize, Mr. Salt. You're doing your best in difficult circumstances.

At this point two SOLDIERS holding a wounded OFFICER enter at the back of the box. JACKSON sees them.

JACKSON
(to SALT)
Excuse me.

JACKSON nods to the SOLDIERS and takes a sheet of paper from one of them.

JACKSON
(consulting paper)
AH ... the officer who risked his life by single-handedly destroying six enemy cannon and rescuing ten of our men captured by the Turk.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

OFFICER
Yes, sir.

JACKSON
The officer about whom we've heard so much.

OFFICER
(modestly)
I suppose so, sir.

JACKSON
(smiling)
Always taking risks far beyond the call of duty.

OFFICER
I only did my best, sir.

JACKSON
(not unpleasantly)
Have him executed at one. This sort of behavior is demoralizing for the ordinary soldiers and citizens who are leading normal, simple, unexceptional lives. Things are difficult enough without these emotional people rocking the boat.

The soldiers salute and take the unfortunate OFFICER away. JACKSON returns to dealing with business as the terrified SALT retreats, as unobtrusively as possible, from the box.

CUT TO:

THE AUDITORIUM as the MUSICIANS begin to play some sort of Eastern music. The AUDIENCE settles into their seats and falls silent as the curtains open to reveal the Sultan's Harem. DAISY, ROSE and VIOLET, dressed as odalisques, are dancing round the stage. As the curtains open a cut-out cloud, suspended on wires, begins to descend from the flies. SALT, as BARON MUNCHAUSEN, stands posed on the cloud. The "ODALISQUES" look up in amazement.

SALT
"Aaah ... Constantinople ... the court of the Grand Turk ... "

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

CUT TO:

A SHOT HIGH IN THE WINGS from where dark FIGURES are lowering SALT. SALT squints down at JACKSON from his cloud.

SALT (CONT.)
" ... What a surprise that a passing zephyr should waft me here ... "

CUT TO:

THE FRONT OF HOUSE as the cloud reaches stage level.

SALT (CONT.)
" ... Perhaps fate wishes me to teach the Sultan a lesson or two."

The AUDIENCE likes this last line. They laugh and cheer. SALT glances towards JACKSON, whom he sees staring stony-faced back at him. SALT then steps off the cloud, which immediately returns to the flies as the "SULTAN" enters clutching a bottle. He salutes the "BARON" and joins the "ODALISQUES" who have once more begun dancing.

SALT
"His Highness, the Sultan, loved a good wine, and could never resist a wager. Characteristics that were to cost him dear ... "

At this point we hear a hoarse, cracked voice bellowing from the back of the auditorium. The AUDIENCE turns around to see an OLD MAN with a mangy DOG tottering down the aisle, towards the stage, with the aid of sticks. The OLD MAN is dressed in what was once an expensive, flamboyant, uniform, but which is now faded and tattered. He looks old and sick.

OLD MAN
(staggering)
Lies! ... Lies! ... You scoundrel, I won't put up with this! It's intolerable! Stop this travesty! Stop it!

The MUSICIANS and the DANCERS on stage grind to a halt as the OLD MAN lurches towards them. SALT is horrified; he is moving his mouth but no sound is coming out.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

OLD MAN
It's an insult, an indignity! I've never seen so much rubbish in all my life! You don't know what you're talking about.

CUT TO:

JACKSON, in the royal box.

JACKSON
(puzzled, to functionary)
Is this supposed to happen?

FUNCTIONARY
Er ... Yes, sir, I should think so.

CUT TO:

THE STAGE where SALT is trying to get everyone to keep going.

SALT
"One day, after a sumptuous dinner ... The Sultan bade me accompany him to his private apartments ... "

At this point the OLD MAN begins to climb, with difficulty, onto the stage.

OLD MAN
(feeble but determined)
This blackguard's an impostor! ... *I* am the Baron Munchausen! ... And I won't be made a fool of!

SALT
(frantic)
Please! ... You cannot come up here! We are presenting a performance!

The AUDIENCE now twigs that this is not part of the program and a general murmur runs around the auditorium. SALT glances towards JACKSON apprehensively as the BARON (for it is he) finally makes it onto the stage.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

BARON
(struggling to draw his saber)
You are presenting mockery! You present me as if I were a ridiculous fiction! ... a joke! I won't have it!

SALT tries to bundle the BARON off the stage. The BARON's DOG yaps and growls at SALT. The AUDIENCE laughs and cheers. As the BARON is struggling with SALT, he manages to draw his saber, and in so doing, inadvertently slices the tip off the end of SALT's false nose. The AUDIENCE really loves this. SALT gestures at DESMOND, RUPERT, JEREMY and BILL.

SALT
Get him off! For heaven's sake!

DESMOND, JEREMY, BILL and RUPERT look at each other doubtfully as the BARON begins flaying around, dangerously, with his saber. DESMOND, JEREMY and RUPERT try to push BILL forward but instead he retreats well away from the swirling saber and the growling DOG. As the BARON lurches about he severs a rope which sends a giant prop chandelier crashing onto the stage.

SALT
(glancing towards JACKSON)
Curtains!

The curtains are closed, at which the AUDIENCE boos and jeers.

CUT TO:

JACKSON in the royal box.

JACKSON
What the devil's going on?

CUT TO:

ON STAGE where the BARON is lurching around examining the set and the actresses, apparently oblivious to the havoc he's created. SALLY looks on, fascinated.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

SALT
(apoplectic)
Get off! Get off! You cretinous old fool! You're ruining the show!

The BARON's DOG keeps SALT at bay.

SALT
Down boy! Down!
(almost in tears)
Somebody get rid of him! ... Get him out of here! Quickly! ... Bill! Jeremy! Do something! I must talk with my audience.

CUT TO:

THE AUDITORIUM as SALT steps through the curtain to address the excited and fractious AUDIENCE.

SALT
Er ... Ladies and gentlemen ...
(darting an anxious look at Jackson)
I must apologize for this ... this most dreadful occurrence. I can assure you that we will endeavor to continue with the performance as advertised in your street.

CUT TO:

ON STAGE where the BARON, who is very weak, is continuing his investigation of the set and the ACTRESSES.

ROSE
(simply)
Hello.

DAISY
(inimitably)
Hello.

BARON
Beautiful ladies, yes.
(to VIOLET)
Beautiful lady.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

VIOLET
You have really great taste, sir!

BARON
But otherwise it's all quite wrong.

DESMOND
(Edging towards the BARON)
Eh, listen, Cocky, we've got a show to do.

BARON
(Apparently taking in DESMOND for the first time)
Good Lord! Berthold!

DESMOND
Who's Berthold!

The BARON is overjoyed and embraces DESMOND violently.

BARON
How on earth ... ? It's marvelous to see you! How are you? Where have you been? How are your legs! Where are the others?

Looking over DESMOND's shoulder the BARON focuses on BILL, RUPERT and JEREMY.

BARON
Albrecht! ... Adolphus! Gustavus! I can't believe it! ... This is miraculous!

BILL, RUPERT and JEREMY look perplexed.

BILL
I'm Bill.

JEREMY
He's Bill.

At this point SALT returns through the curtains.

SALT
Is he still here?! Will you get rid of him for goodness' sake!

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

JACKSON and a couple of FUNCTIONARIES and GENERALS walk onto the stage.

JACKSON
Is anything the matter?

SALT
(desperate)
I'm dreadfully sorry, sir. We're about to begin the second act again. Any moment now, sir. If you would just ...

JACKSON
(indicating Munchausen)
Who is this?

SALT
I've no idea ... Some old lunatic ...

SALLY
(stirring it)
He's Baron Munchausen.

The BARON smiles at SALLY and bows to her. SALLY returns his smile. SALT, appalled at SALLY's interjection, signals to her to shut up. JACKSON and his COHORTS look at SALLY in surprise and then laugh condescendingly.

JACKSON
(humoring SALLY)
Oh, I see. The *real* Baron Munchausen.

BARON
Yes, indeed. And who, sir, may I ask, are you?

JACKSON
(modestly)
A public servant. I am responsible for, among other things, the licensing of this theater.

SALT
(for JACKSON's benefit)
This, sir, is the Right Ordinary
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

SALT (CONT.)
Horatio Jackson, who just happens to be winning the war and saving the city.

BARON
Ha!

SALT
Now please, leave us.

BARON
He's an ass! Only I can end this war.

EVERYONE is rather taken aback at this statement.

JACKSON
(smiles indulgently)
Explain yourself.

BARON
I can end it, because I began it. I am the cause.

The FUNCTIONARIES and GENERALS find this very amusing.

JACKSON
I'm afraid, sir, you have a rather weak grasp of reality.

BARON
Your "reality," sir, is lies and balderdash, and I'm delighted to say that I have no grasp of it whatsoever.

SALLY is clearly intrigued by the BARON.

JACKSON
(stiffly)
This man obviously needs a doctor.

BARON
(alarmed)
Doctor?! Doctor?!

SALT
(anxiously)
We will continue with the show. Thank you very much, your Ordinaryness.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

JACKSON and his FUNCTIONARIES exeunt to the royal box.

SALT
(to the BARON)
Right. OFF!

ARGUS barks at SALT and drives him back from the BARON.

SALT
(desperate)
Please! Please be reasonable. If we don't get on with it he will throw us to the Turks!

BARON
I will "get on with it."

To the horror and amazement of SALT and the COMPANY and before they can do anything about it, the BARON stomps through the curtains and out onto the forestage.

CUT TO:

THE AUDITORIUM as the BARON emerges in front of the curtains. The noisy and impatient AUDIENCE cheers and jeers him. JACKSON is surprised and angered by the BARON's appearance.

BARON
My lords, ladies, and gentlemen — Baron Munchausen, at your service.

The BARON bows. There are a few good humored shouts from the AUDIENCE which seems to approve of this version of the BARON.

AUDIENCE
Give us another tune on your saber!
(laughs)

BARON
Most of you won't remember me ... or my adventures ... but I assure you, they are true.

AUDIENCE
True, eh? That's the stuff! Tell us
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

AUDIENCE (CONT.)
the truth! Come on, let's have the truth! Quick, before you drop dead!
(laughs)

ANGLE ON JACKSON, who instructs a couple of his GENERALS to silence the BARON. They climb out of the front of the box and advance across the stage, but the AUDIENCE disapproves of this and begins shouting that the BARON be left alone.

AUDIENCE
Leave him alone! Let him be! We want the Baron! Leave the old geezer alone! Etc.

The GENERALS hesitate and look back at JACKSON who, seeing mood of the AUDIENCE is against him, recalls the GENERALS to the box. The AUDIENCE cheer and applaud at their victory whereupon JACKSON smiles and waves to them, trying to give the impression that he accepts the applause as meant for him and his decision.

BARON
The truth is, I am the cause of the siege!

The AUDIENCE falls about.

WOMAN A.
What about the Turks then?!

MAN B.
You're the cause of the border dispute, are you?

MAN C.
What border dispute? It's the sea routes we're fighting for!

WOMAN B.
No it isn't. It's because we refused to pay them tribute money.

MAN A.
That was last time. It's because they insulted us!

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

MAN C.
How?

MAN A.
(thinks)
I dunno ...

WOMAN A.
Their ears are set too close together, that's what started it.

MAN A.
Eyes! Eyes! How can their ears be set too close together unless their heads are too narrow?

Members of the AUDIENCE start fighting one another, and take up the cry of: "Their heads are too narrow!"

BARON
You poor deluded fools.

The AUDIENCE calms down, and sheepishly watch the BARON.

BARON
If you will only do me the courtesy of accepting the word of a gentleman, I will reveal the true cause of the war!

The BARON draws and flourishes his saber, which has the effect of opening the curtains. The COMPANY, who have all been peering through a tiny gap between the curtains, are caught unawares and dance off in all directions, some into the wings and some to take up positions on stage.

BARON
After my return from Egypt, I was warmly welcomed by the Grand Turk, His Highness the Sultan, who knew of my reputation and held me in high esteem. In fact, so delighted was he with my company, that he offered me access to his harem. One day, the Sultan brought me a bottle of his favorite Tokay ...

9 SULTAN'S HAREM

CLOSE ON the SULTAN (played by one of SALT's actors) as he enters filling two glasses from a bottle. As we track along with him the set becomes less and less theatrical. It also becomes far too big for the stage and develops ceilings and 360° of existence. The characters lose their theatrical makeup and appear to be real people ... although all a bit fairy-tale-like. The SULTAN hands one of the wine glasses to the BARON (who has miraculously reverted to his younger state). Lying in a bed of flowers on an oriental rug in front of the SULTAN is a TIGER. The BARON and SULTAN touch glasses, and drink. The ODALISQUES look on.

SULTAN
What do you think of that, eh?

BARON
Not bad.

SULTAN
Not bad?! My dear Munchausen, it's impossible to find better.

BARON
Humbug, Your Majesty! What do you wager that I don't procure for you, within the hour, a bottle of Tokay far superior to this, from the Imperial cellar at Vienna, a mere thousand odd miles away? Accept my challenge ... If I don't succeed you may cut my head off. These are my stakes. What are yours?

SULTAN
I accept. And if you succeed, you may take from my treasury as much treasure as the strongest man can carry.

BARON
Agreed. Give me pen and ink and I'll write to the Empress immediately.

The SULTAN sends a servant to bring pen and ink. Meanwhile the BARON leans out of a window at the back of the stage, and shouts to those below.

(CONTINUED)

9 **CONTINUED:**

BARON
Berthold!

10 **EXT. A FOUNTAIN SQUARE IN THE GROUNDS OF SULTAN'S PALACE. DAY.**

The BARON's P.O.V. We see, from above, a group of four MEN sitting around a table in a square, playing cards. On hearing the BARON the MEN all look up and acknowledge him.

BERTHOLD
Coming!

These are ALBRECHT, ADOLPHUS, GUSTAVUS and BERTHOLD, played by BILL, RUPERT, JEREMY, and DESMOND. (This scene, like all the scenes in the Sultan's Tale, retains a highly theatrical style and flavor, constantly reminding us that we are, in fact, in a story told by the BARON.)

BERTHOLD gets up from the table and hobbles into the palace. He has heavy weights attached to his ankles.

11 **THE SULTAN'S HAREM. DAY.**

The SERVANT arrives with a pen and ink. THE BARON quickly scribbles a letter. As he is signing it, BERTHOLD drags his weighted legs through the door.

BARON
(giving letter to Berthold)
Take this to Vienna, to the Empress.
She'll give you a bottle of wine.
Bring it straight back to me.

BERTHOLD
Right-oh.

Berthold puts the letter into his pocket, unfastens the weights from his legs, and vanishes like the Road Runner, whooshing off in a cloud of dust that digs a hole in the floor, then takes him out of the door at incredible speed. The BARON, followed by the Sultan, leaps across to the window and looks out.

12 EXT. VIEW FROM THE HAREM WINDOW DAY

The BARON and SULTAN'S P.O.V. as they look out of the window just in time to see BERTHOLD appear outside the city walls and zoom away over the horizon, leaving a thin trail of dust.

13 INT. THE SULTAN'S HAREM DAY

The BARON and SULTAN withdraw from the window. The SULTAN dramatically sets up an hourglass. The BARON produces his own mini hour-glass from his waistcoat pocket and sets it going simultaneously with the SULTAN's. He then returns it to his pocket. The BARON and SULTAN drink a toast.

SULTAN
Perhaps you would care for a little light entertainment while you wait. I have been composing a short Opera; would you like to hear a song or two?

BARON
No, thank you.

SULTAN
Oh, you'll love it. It's a Comedy. It's called The Torturer's Apprentice. Here's the Overture.

The SULTAN seats himself at the Torturetron and begins to play. The MUSIC is accompanied by groans and shrieks from inside the strange keyboard instrument. From time to time a SHAKY HAND pushes up the lid of the Torturetron from within and a "CHORISTER" tries to escape. He is beaten back by a guard.

SULTAN
(spoken)
Now, the curtain rises on a typical everyday Torture Chamber. Yosrick the young apprentice sings of his joy in his job.
(sings)
A Torturer's Apprentice went his merry way to work one day.
I bend and stretch and ply my trade
Making people all afraid
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

SULTAN (CONT.)
But things look black
Business is slack
There's no one on the rack but me.
(spoken)
There's something of a recession in his business you see, owing to the spread of various nauseating liberal sentiments. In fact, he has only one victim that day — a beautiful 17 year old girl whom he recognizes in a rack song as his old playmate Griselda.

GRISELDA'S voice comes out of the Torturetron, and is Operatic screaming, sung in perfect pitch but in great pain.

GRISELDA
(sings)
Ah. Ah. Ah ... Ah . . Ah. Ah
Oh. Oh O . . oo . . Oh.
Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah ...

SULTAN
Is it you?

GRISELDA
It is me!

SULTAN
Is it you?

GRISELDA
It is me!

SULTAN
You You You!

GRISELDA
Me! Me! Me!

SULTAN
Oh horror! Torn between his love, his job and her fingernails.

FADE TO time passing with the sand in the hour-glass. FADE BACK up on the SULTAN. He is still going strong at the Opera. The BARON is cross-eyed with boredom and distaste. The SULTAN, while continuing with the dialogue and song below, looks at the near empty

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

hour-glass, smiles at the BARON and beckons forwards his EXECUTIONER. The EXECUTIONER is a fat, sweaty man with a large shiny scimitar. He is blind. His small assistant always leads him around. Together, they begin measuring and preparing the BARON's neck by drawing a dotted line around it. The BARON checks his personal hour-glass and glances at BERTHOLD's weights.

SULTAN
(beckoning the EXECUTIONER)
Act Four is set in an Abbatoir. I see a lot of slapstick. We begin with the arrival of the Eunuch's Chorus who sing "Cut off in my prime, mein hertz, mein hertz."
(sings in a rich falsetto)
Cut off in my prime
Surrounded by beautiful women all the time
A Eunuch's life is hard
A Eunuch's life is hard
A Eunuch's life is hard
And nothing else.

BARON
(rising)
Excuse me a moment.

SULTAN
Oh, you won't want to miss this aria ... it reminds me of my school days in England.

He launches into it.

SULTAN
(sings)
Life is rather like a game
It's important that you win
And though it is a terrible shame
If you lie and cheat and sin
Play up and WIN the game.

The BARON whistles sharply.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

SULTAN
(sings)
And never count the cost
It matters not how you played the frame
As long as you haven't lost.

The BARON whistles again. Seconds later BUCEPHALUS gallops into the harem, scattering GUARDS, SERVANTS, and ODALISQUES.

BARON
(leaping onto Bucephalus)
Back in five minutes.

The BARON on BUCEPHALUS jumps out of the window.

14 EXT. SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

The BARON, astride BUCEPHALUS, leaps from the very high window into the yard.

15 EXT. A SQUARE IN THE GROUNDS OF THE SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

The BARON on BUCEPHALUS lands nearby and gallops up to his EXTRAORDINARY SERVANTS who are sitting around a table playing cards. Throughout the following we continue to hear the SULTAN singing in his harem above.

BARON
(breathless)
Where the hell's Berthold?!

GUSTAVUS
Dunno.

ALBRECHT
I thought he was with you.

BARON
If he's not here in three and a half minutes, the Sultan's going to cut off my head!

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

ADOLPHUS
(pause)
And?

BARON
"And"?

ADOLPHUS
Is that all? ... I'm sorry ... I don't find that funny.
(turning to the others)
Do you find that funny?

BARON
This isn't a joke! ... It's a wager!

ALL
(leaping to their feet)
A wager!

GUSTAVUS jumps up, drops down onto his knees, and presses one of his large ears to the ground.

GUSTAVUS
He's asleep! I can hear him snoring! ... About nine hundred miles away.

ALBRECHT
Come on!

ADOLPHUS hops onto ALBRECHT's outstretched hands and is catapulted onto a parapet and peers out over the landscape.

ADOLPHUS
He's under a tree! Near Belgrade. There's a bottle beside him.

ALBRECHT
(throwing a huge musket to Adolphus)
I hope he hasn't been at it.

ADOLPHUS raises the musket to his shoulder.

ADOLPHUS
(adjusting sights)
What's the wind speed, Gus?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

GUSTAVUS
(wiggling ears)
Three knots.

ADOLPHUS takes aim, and fires it with a great explosion and bolt of flame.

16 EXT. UNDER A TREE OUTSIDE BELGRADE DAY

ANGLE ON BERTHOLD lying asleep under a tree on the outskirts of Belgrade. The bottle of Tokay is by his side. Suddenly something ricochets off the tree above his head, shaking it, and causing bits of branch, twigs, leaves and acorns to fall on top of him. BERTHOLD wakes up, realizes that he's late, and tears off without the bottle, returning to get it two seconds later.

17 EXT. SULTAN'S HAREM

ANGLE ON the hour-glass which is now almost empty. The EXECUTIONER'S ASSISTANT is preparing the chopping block which stands in the center of the harem. A moment later the BARON rushes in, glances at the hour-glass and looks to the horizon.

CUT TO:

BARON'S P.O.V.— there is no sign of BERTHOLD on the horizon — nothing. Throughout the above action the SULTAN sings the following:

SULTAN
(sings)
If I have enemies who hate my guts
I've no judge and court to try them
I pop them into boiling oil
And then I quickly fry them.

If they forgive me, singing hymns
I try pulling off their limbs
How quickly they abandon when
They haven't got a leg to stand on
then.

I'm a modern man
These days I find
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

SULTAN (CONT.)
You have to be awfully cruel to be kind.

I'm a modern man
You will agree
It's either you or me.

The SULTAN peers at the hour-glass with his weak eyes. There are only a few grains of sand left in it.

SULTAN
(stopping singing)
Well, time's nearly up, I think.

The SULTAN raises his hand. The EXECUTIONER'S ASSISTANT helps the BARON to kneel with his head on the chopping block. The EXECUTIONER takes his position and lifts his sword. The SULTAN has his eye on the hour-glass. Does the BARON hear something? He twists his head to look to the horizon.

CUT TO:

THE BARON'S P.O.V. as BERTHOLD appears in the distance and etches his way across the landscape at amazing speed.

ANGLE ON the BARON as he starts to speak and the SULTAN's arm drops. The EXECUTIONER's sword swishes downwards and BERTHOLD zooms into the terrace. The blade stops just as it touches the back of the BARON's neck. BERTHOLD skids to a halt, plowing deep into the floor of the terrace, concertina-ing the marble paving.

The BARON looks at the hourglass and whips out his personal mini-hour-glass to check as a final grain falls.

BERTHOLD, lying in the trough, hands out the bottle of Tokay and a letter for the BARON.

BERTHOLD
I'm not late, am I?

BARON
(weak at the knees)
No, no ... not late ... Thank you very much.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

As he stands a plait of his hair falls to the ground — he glances at it:

BARON
I needed a trim.

The SULTAN is delighted as he greedily samples the bottle of Tokay.

SULTAN
Hmmm. Delicious. You win.

The SULTAN claps his hands and the TREASURER steps forward and bows.

SULTAN
Treasurer, allow my friend here to take from the treasury as much as the strongest man can carry.

18 **INT. THE SULTAN'S TREASURY DAY**

The entrance, where the TREASURER unlocks a heavy iron door and admits the BARON, ALBRECHT, ADOLPHUS, GUSTAVUS and BERTHOLD to a chamber full of gold bars, coins, chests full of precious stones, etc.

DISSOLVE TO:

19 **INT. THE SULTAN'S TREASURY LATER**

ALBRECHT, loaded with treasure from the now empty chamber, is being guided out of the door by the BARON and the rest of the GANG. The TREASURER is extremely worried. He watches the BARON and CO. with disapproval before hurrying purposefully away.

20 **INT. THE SULTAN'S BATHS DAY**

The SULTAN, sitting on cushions and surrounded by the ODALISQUES, is drinking his Tokay. The SULTAN'S TIGER is with him as usual. The TREASURER enters and bows low. He is terrified. He explains to the SULTAN what has just happened in the treasury. The SULTAN leaps up in a rage, snatches a scimitar from one of the GUARDS, and cuts off the TREASURER'S head with one blow. He then runs from the chamber followed by the GUARDS. One of the ODALISQUES is left holding the TREASURER's head

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

which fell into her lap. She is horrified. The TREASURER's head winks at her.

21 EXT. FOUNTAIN SQUARE DAY

The BARON and CO. guide the heavily laden ALBRECHT. Suddenly, the furious SULTAN appears above them with a couple of dozen GUARDS. The SULTAN gives an order and the GUARDS advance on the BARON and CO. In response to this, GUSTAVUS steps forward, takes a deep breath, and blows the GUARDS and the SULTAN back up the steps. As he does this, another group of GUARDS appears below them, and GUSTAVUS turns around and gives this group the same treatment. By this time the SULTAN and the GUARDS above have recovered and begin to advance again, as do the GUARDS below. The BARON draws his saber and GUSTAVUS takes another deep breath. It looks as if they may be in for a tough fight. The SULTAN now shouts another order, and the wall next to the BARON is shattered as a huge cannon-ball crashes into it. Looking up, the BARON and CO. see the parapet surrounding the stairwell is bristling with cannon barrels. As these cannon fire, the walls surrounding the BARON and CO. collapse, and are seen to be the walls of the stage set which is collapsing around the BARON and ACTORS as the real cannon-balls of the besieging Turks crash into the town and theater.

22 INT. ON STAGE NIGHT

As the real bombardment begins, the BARON (old again) steps forward and addresses the AUDIENCE and JACKSON.

BARON
And so ... as you can see, the Sultan is still after my head.

The AUDIENCE rises from their seats, on the verge of panic, as debris falls throughout the collapsing theater.

BARON
Wait! stop! Don't go! Don't leave! I haven't finished. There's more, there's more!

For a second the AUDIENCE hesitates, still under the BARON's spell. The BARON's shadow, thrown by a

(CONTINUED)

guttering footlight, fills the stage and seems to stretch out to embrace the AUDIENCE.

The BARON appeals to JEREMY, BILL, DESMOND and RUPERT, who are standing in the middle of the stage.

BARON
Gustavus, Adolphus, Albrecht! We're about to make off with the Sultan's treasure. We can't just stop. Berthold?!

DESMOND
The name's Desmond, mate. We're actors, not figments of your imagination. Get a grip.

Another shell lands close by, breaking the spell and sending the AUDIENCE screaming for the exit. The BARON appears to crumple slightly as if his energy has left him.

BARON
(feebly)
Come back! ... Come back! ...

CUT TO:

JACKSON AND CO. in the royal box where they are all getting in each other's way as they attempt to escape. JACKSON struggles out onto the stage.

JACKSON
What the devil is the Sultan playing at? It's Wednesday, isn't it?

SALT limps across the stage to JACKSON.

SALT
(abject)
I'm terribly sorry, sir, about the show. One or two minor setbacks here, sir.

JACKSON
(objectively)
This theater is closed. I want you and your company out of this city by tomorrow.

22 CONTINUED:

SALT
Oh, no, sir, no ... Oh sir, sir, sir, please!
(pulling broadsheets from his pocket as he chases after him)
Look at these favorable endorsements from all over Europe, sir.
(reading)
"Henry Salt and Son holds a mirror up to nature.": Vienna Clarion. "Great value for money.": Paris Echo. "A good night out.": Glasgow Herald. Just give us one second.

JACKSON and his entourage hurry away, crossing the stage and knocking the BARON aside as they go. SALT chases after them, pleading, as more shells land in and around the theater bringing down part of the proscenium arch, filling the place with smoke and dust.

CUT TO:

SALLY, who is sheltering backstage under a props table. As the dust begins to clear the BARON's DOG finds SALLY, whimpers agitatedly, and makes all the signs indicating that it wants SALLY to follow it. SALLY does so, crawling through the rubble and dust. At the back of the stage, in a tent of collapsed rubble and masonry, SALLY sees the recumbent figure of the BARON, on whose chest is kneeling the hooded, black-winged, skeletal figure of DEATH. Propped beside DEATH is his scythe and hourglass. The hourglass contains a tiny amount of sand still to run out from the upper chamber.

DEATH has one hand on the BARON's neck while with the other he is struggling to pull a fluttering, glowing something from the BARON's mouth. DEATH seems to sense SALLY's presence and turns to see her. Surprised and angered by this interruption, DEATH rears up, wings spread wide and hood falling back to reveal a shock of red hair flapping scraggily from a rotten skull. He looks monumental and horrible. SALLY is terrified. DEATH advances towards her. SALLY picks up a candelabra and makes as if to throw it at DEATH who shudders and transmogrifies into harmless items of props and bits of theatrical costume lying around the stage. The BARON's DOG stops growling and moves to the

(CONTINUED)

BARON wagging its tail. SALLY steps towards the BARON. As she does so she instinctively turns the hourglass upside down, preventing the final grains from running out. At this moment the BARON stirs and opens his eyes. From his recumbent position on the floor, Sally is framed with a pair of theatrical prop wings hanging from the theater roof ... and she seems to take on the appearance of an angel, as she holds a candelabra up to peer more closely at him.

SALLY
Are you all right?

BARON
(feebly)
Am I dead?

SALLY
No.

BARON
Blast!

SALLY
(pauses)
Who are you *really*?

BARON
(groans with disgust)

SALLY
Baron Munchausen isn't real. He's only in stories.

BARON
(exasperated)
Go away ... I'm trying to die.

SALLY
(puzzled)
Why?

BARON
Because ... I am tired of the world ... and the world is evidently tired of me.

SALLY
But why?

22 **CONTINUED:**

SALLY prods him.

SALLY
(repeats)
Why?

BARON
(goaded by Sally's persistence)
Why? Why? Why? ... Because it's all logic and reason now ... Science ... Progress ... The laws of hydraulics ... The laws of social dynamics, the laws of this, that and the other ... No place for three-legged cyclopes from the South seas ... No place for cucumber trees ... or oceans of wine ... No place for me ...

SALLY
What happened in the story?

BARON
What?

SALLY
In the Sultan's palace ... Did you escape? ... Were you killed?

BARON
(very tired)
I don't know ... It was all a long time ago ... Who cares?

SALLY
I do.

BARON
I'm very tired. Good-bye.

SALLY
Please tell me.

BARON
No.

SALLY
Go on.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

BARON
Buzz off!

SALLY
(suddenly cross and impatient)
Tell me!

The BARON is rather surprised by SALLY's vehemence.

SALLY
(pause)
Please.

The BARON begins to believe that SALLY might just have the makings of a loyal and responsive audience. In fact he's almost hooked on the idea.

BARON
You really want to know, don't you?

Another shell crashes into the theater, knocking down more of the wall. SALLY freaks out and bursts into angry tears.

SALLY
Stop it! ... Stop it! ... We'll all be killed! ... And then I'll *never* know the end of the story!

Another cannonball smashes into the back of the theater. SALLY is furious. She runs out onto the stage, jumps into the auditorium, and races off over the demolished wall into the smoke-filled square.

BARON
(shouting after her)
Wait! Wait, where are you going?!

CUT TO:

THE BARON's P.O.V. of SALLY as she disappears into the town square.

ANGLE ON the BARON.

BARON
Come back! ... Take cover! ...

The BARON drags himself out from under his scenery

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

shelter, hobbles across the stage, and stomps off, with difficulty, in pursuit of SALLY. The DOG trots beside him.

BARON
Wretched child!

23 EXT. THE MAIN SQUARE NIGHT

ANGLE ON SALLY as she runs through the main square. Buildings are burning around her, and CITIZENS are running for cover. She passes the gibbet to which the body of the HEROIC OFFICER has now been added. SALLY runs into the cathedral.

24 INT. CATHEDRAL NIGHT

SALLY runs through the cathedral which has been converted into a hospital. All around are DEAD and DYING. A group of DOCTORS is amputating a SOLDIER's leg. SALLY hurries through and out of the building.

25 EXT. THE TOP OF THE CITY BATTLEMENTS NIGHT

ANGLE ON a GUN CREW who are sitting beside their cannon on the battlements, discussing the situation. Turkish shells and cannon-balls are hurtling past them.

SALLY runs up the steps to the battlements, a few yards away from the gunners. She jumps on top of the crenelated outer wall and begins angrily throwing stones into the swirling dust and smoke beyond.

SALLY
(shouting)
Stop it! Stop it!

GUNNER A
Shouldn't we be firing back at them, Sir?

COMMANDER
No firing on Wednesdays, it's in the rules.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

GUNNER A
I know, Sir, but ...

COMMANDER
If we fire back at them, that's tantamount to saying that either we *don't* know it's Wednesday and are thoroughly confused, or we *do* know it's Wednesday but don't care.

GUNNER A
But why are they doing it, Sir?

GUNNER B
Maybe they want us to think it's Tuesday or Thursday.

COMMANDER
In my view, they're trying to undermine our values — everything we stand for. Wednesday has been half-day closing in this town since 1592. It's our tradition. "Half-day closing — all day Wednesday." If we let that go, it's the beginning of the end.

The BARON followed by ARGUS staggers up to SALLY as a cannonball strikes the wall a few yards away, showering them both with dust and lumps of stone.

BARON
Get down!

SALLY picks up a piece of stone and hurls it towards the enemy.

SALLY
No!

BARON
You'll get us both killed!

SALLY
(throwing another rock)
I thought you wanted to die!

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

BARON
(out of breath)
Yes, but I'm old enough.

Another enemy cannonball thumps into the wall nearby, throwing out more fragments of stone. The BARON walks a few yards along the wall to the GUN CREW who are sitting idly by their cannon.

BARON
(to the gun crew)
Gentlemen, wouldn't it be a good thing, if you were to silence that enemy cannon?

The GUN CREW all shake their heads.

COMMANDER
No, Sir.

BARON
No?

COMMANDER
(incredulous)
It's Wednesday!

The BARON is unable to believe his ears. He exchanges a look with SALLY, who clearly also thinks that this sounds stupid. At this point another cannonball hits the wall close by. The BARON snatches up a mortar shell and drops it onto the barrel of the mortar, thus firing the mortar. He then grabs the shell as it emerges and shoots off with it towards the Turkish camp. The BARON disappears out into the smoke on the mortar shell, leaving SALLY and the GUN CREW open-mouthed.

26 EXT. WITH THE BARON, ON THE MORTAR SHELL NIGHT

The BARON, clutching the mortar shell, soars through the air high above the turkish camp. The fuse of the mortar smolders in front of him. He tries to blow it out.

27 EXT. THE BARON'S P.O.V. FROM ABOVE THE TURKS NIGHT

We see, below us, through the murk, groups of Turkish

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

SOLDIERS advancing stealthily towards the city with ladders, towers, battering rams and elephants with battle towers on their backs. Suddenly the view revolves and we are looking up towards the stars.

28 EXT. THE BARON ON MORTAR SHELL NIGHT

The BARON is hanging upside down from the mortar shell, desperately trying to right himself.

29 EXT. A TURKISH CANNON ON THE GROUND NIGHT

Behind the Turkish lines, a group of TURKISH GUNNERS fire their cannon.

30 EXT. WITH THE BARON ON THE MORTAR SHELL AND CANNONBALL NIGHT

ANGLE ON the BARON where we see, from behind his shoulder, the flash of the Turkish cannon below, and the Turkish cannonball zooming up towards him. The BARON shifts the path of his outward bound mortar shell, grabs the Turkish cannonball as it passes him, and begins his journey back towards the town. He looks back to see his shell hit the Turkish cannon blowing it to smithereens. He smiles.

Continuing on his way he overtakes the spectral, hooded figure of DEATH. DEATH, irritated at being overtaken, swings at the BARON with his scythe. The BARON ducks and accelerates exultantly on.

31 EXT. ON THE TOWN BATTLEMENTS NIGHT

SALLY and the GUN CREW and ARGUS are peering out into the smoke and murk when they see the BARON zooming towards them. The GUNNERS duck down behind the crenelated wall as the BARON lets go of his cannonball (which continues into the town), spreads his coat to make a parachute, and glides down to land fairly roughly beside them. The BARON now looks marginally younger than he did at the beginning of the evening, but on landing he twists his ankle, ricks his back, sprains his wrist, etc. (i.e., he isn't Superman).

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

BARON
Ow! ... Ah! ... Oh! ... The Turks are about to storm the walls!

SALLY
(awed)
You really are Baron Munchausen.

The GUNNERS can't believe what they've seen but, at that moment, the cannon takes a direct hit, and the entire GUN CREW are killed.

SALLY
(grabbing the BARON)
Come on!

SALLY hustles the BARON down the steps, off the battlements.

32 EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THEATER NIGHT

The city is burning again, and shells and cannonballs are raining down. A loose horse bolts past dragging an empty carriage, with one wheel broken off. The coachman's boots are still on the driving platform. As it hurtles past the theater, a distraught SALT appears in the doorway. The other members of the company are with him.

SALT
(beside himself)
That's it, it's the end, it's all over! Generations of theatrical expertise snuffed out in the twinkling of an eye!

SALLY appears dragging the limp BARON across the square. ARGUS sticks close to the BARON.

SALT
Sally! ...
(pulling her away from the BARON)
You cretinous, senile old fart! Thanks to you, we're to be thrown to the Turks!

A shell explodes nearby and SALT, SALLY the BARON and the others duck back into the comparative shelter of the foyer of the theater.

33 INT. **THE FOYER OF THE THEATER** **NIGHT**

SALLY
(excited)
He really is Baron Munchausen! ... The real one!

SALT
(distraught)
Oh, shut up!

SALLY
But he is! And he can save us! ...
(to the BARON)
Can't you?

BARON
(looking clapped-out)
Er ...

SALLY
(enthusiastically)
I know! You could escape — find your funny servants and bring them back to rescue us.
(excited)
He jumped onto a cannonball ... he really did ... and flew away miles into the sky ... up above the elephants and soldiers ... and ...

SALT
Oh God! Stop lying!

SALLY
I'm not lying!
(triumphant, to the BARON)
Am I?!

BARON
As a matter of fact, you are.

SALLY
(stunned by this "betrayal")
But you did! ... And those soldiers saw it too!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

SALLY (CONT.)
(to SALT)
They'll tell you! ...
(recalling the scene)
Oh ... they're dead.

SALT
(groans)

SALLY
But he did.

BARON
No, I didn't!

SALLY
(furious)
Now *you're* lying!

BARON
(starchily)
I never lie.

SALLY, seething with rage, kicks the BARON and runs off into the theater to hide her tears. BILL, JEREMY, RUPERT and DESMOND look accusingly at the BARON.

BARON
(exhausted but pedantic to the end)
I didn't "*fly miles.*" It was more like a mile and a half. And I didn't precisely "fly," I merely held onto a mortar shell in the first instance and *then* a cannonball on the way back.

SALT
You maniac! You've done for us!

The DOG growls at SALT

BARON
Actually, it doesn't matter whether you're thrown out or stay here. The Turks are about to take the town.

EVERYBODY looks in horror at the BARON. They don't quite know whether to believe him.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

SALT
(breaking down)
And I'm just coming into my prime. Just on the cusp between Romeo and King Lear! ... My public will kill me for dying at a time like this.

At this point, we hear the desperate shouting and the noise of soldiers moving cannon on gun-carriages. SALT & CO. look out through the hole in the theater wall.

CUT TO:

SALT AND CO.'s P.O.V. where we see the desperate activity of SOLDIERS trundling cannons past the theater towards a breech somewhere in the defenses. Trumpets are sounding the call to arms.

ANGLE ON SALT & CO. as VIOLET, ROSE and DAISY throw themselves at the BARON.

DAISY
(clutching the BARON and baby)
Save us! Save us!

ROSE
Please, Baron!

VIOLET
(pleading)
Baron, you are a Baron, aren't you?

DAISY
You're our only hope!

VIOLET
You're *my* only hope!

BARON
Ladies, ladies ... please ... please.

The BARON, suddenly surrounded at close proximity by distraught women, is overcome by something which sublimates itself in chivalry.

BARON
... I swear that as long as I, Hieronymous Karl Friedrich, Baron von
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

BARON (CONT.)
Munchausen ... live and breathe, you shall come to no harm.

VIOLET
Oh yes ... Oh yes ... Say it again.

SALT
(contemptuously)
Ha!

The BARON produces red paper roses from inside his jacket and presents one each to VIOLET, ROSE and DAISY.

BARON
(presenting roses)
You so remind me of Catherine the Great, the Empress of all the Russias, whose hand in marriage I once had the honor to decline.

DESMOND
They all remind you?

BARON
Yes. Why not? Some bits here, some bits there.
(grandly)
I have a plan ... I will set forth immediately ...

The BARON pulls his saber from its scabbard and tries to flourish it, but in so doing, falls over from weakness and exhaustion.

BARON
(from the floor)
... find my extraordinary servants, and with their help, raise the siege and save the town.

SALT
(sarcastically)
Oh, brilliant, very good, bravo.

DAISY
How?

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

BARON
Ladies, I shall require your assistance.

VIOLET
Of course.

DAISY
Anything.

ROSE
Just tell us what to do.

BARON
Kindly be so good as to remove your knickers.

34 EXT. ON FORESTAGE IN THEATER DAWN

We are looking at a pile of material which is moving and writhing around in an odd sort of way.

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that we on the forestage of the theater, and that the material is hundreds of pieces of silk underwear which have been sewn together to make a balloon. The balloon is attached by ropes to the miniature galleon which becomes a gondola.

There is a small brazier in the crow's nest of the galleon from where the BARON is working bellows which are blowing hot air into the balloon. The BARON is very lively and seems much rejuvenated by this undertaking. The DOG is leaping excitedly about the galleon. The theater COMPANY are holding the guide ropes of the balloon, keeping it clear of entanglement, and waiting for it to rise. The auditorium is full of TOWNSPEOPLE watching the proceedings. Outside, at the walls and gates of the town, the Turkish attack continues.

DESMOND
(ecstatic, looking up at the balloon)
Look at all that underwear. Isn't it beautiful? It's like a dream come true. It's the dawning of the age of ... lovely, intimate things.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

BILL
But it's madness. He'll kill himself.

The BARON continues to fill the balloon with hot air.

DESMOND
Yes, but well worth it, eh?

JEREMY and RUPERT are holding onto ropes from the balloon.

JEREMY
How do we know he isn't just saving his own skin, eh?

RUPERT
Oh, shut up!

JEREMY
It's only because he's tall, isn't it? I mean, let's face it - if he was a foot shorter this wouldn't be happening.

RUPERT
Be quiet!

JEREMY
(getting angry)
And if he was two feet shorter his tales would be all about how he spent his life in fairy-land, with other little people, down some whimsical chocolate mine!

ANGLE ON ROSE and DAISY.

DAISY
(wistfully looking up towards the BARON)
Can you trust a man who makes balloons out of underwear?

BARON
Trust me, madam. Your underwear is in good hands.

ANGLE ON VIOLET.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

VIOLET
(shouting at the BARON)
I'll wait for you!

35 **EXT. HOLE IN AUDITORIUM WALL DAWN**

Two SOLDIERS are watching the activity on stage with suspicion. They exchange looks.

36 **EXT. SQUARE DAWN**

The two SOLDIERS hurry away across the square.

37 **INT. THE COUNCIL CHAMBER TOWN HALL DAWN**

In the council chamber, HORATIO JACKSON and his FUNCTIONARIES continue to conduct the war. They have been up all night, and are exhausted.

JACKSON
(discarding plans)
No, no, no ... We need a very simple plan. These are far too complicated. Simplicity is of the essence.

FUNCTIONARIES look puzzled.

A COLONEL enters. The two SOLDIERS we saw in the square wait outside the door.

COLONEL
Sir ... Sir, those actors have made an air balloon. They're trying to escape.

JACKSON
Arrest them at once. Throw them out of the town.

COLONEL
We can't open the gates, sir.

JACKSON
Well, throw them over the walls then.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

COLONEL
Yes, sir.

The COLONEL exits.

JACKSON
We can't start escaping at a time like this ... What would future generations think of us.

38 **INT. THEATER AUDITORIUM DAWN**

The BARON gives the balloon a final couple of blasts from the bellows, providing it with sufficient air to lift it off the stage. The balloon then lifts gently into position above the galleon which is still stationary. Everybody is very excited, and the AUDIENCE cheers as the balloon begins to float. The galleon swings into position, knocking a couple of already-wounded members of the audience over.

39 **EXT. TOWN SQUARE DAWN**

The COLONEL and a group of GUARDS are racing across the square towards the theater.

40 **INT. IN FRONT OF THE THEATER DAWN**

The BARON gives the balloon another couple of blasts of hot air, causing it to lift the galleon just clear of the fore-stage. The balloon with its gondola is now straining at the ropes, and the ACTORS are having difficulty hanging onto it. ROSE climbs a ladder leaning against the galleon. SALT rushes on from backstage.

SALT
(fraught)
Oy! Have you seen Sally?

BARON
(operating bellows)
No!

At this point the COLONEL and his GUARDS run into the auditorium.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

COLONEL
Stop! ... You're under arrest!

The COLONEL and GUARDS begin pushing their way through the AUDIENCE towards the balloon. The BARON sees them coming.

BARON
(heaving out ballast)
Let her go! ... Let her go! ...
(he doffs his hat to ROSE)

The ACTORS let go of the ropes, and the balloon slowly begins to rise, taking the galleon with it.

COLONEL
(to GUARDS)
Shoot it down!
(raising his saber)
Take aim!

The GUARDS raise their muskets and take aim at the balloon whereupon ARGUS jumps from the gondola, runs to the COLONEL and leaps at him. The COLONEL falls back, knocking over the GUARDS domino fashion. Their muskets go off harmlessly into the air.

BARON
(shouting down to the AUDIENCE)
Ladies and gentlemen, I will return shortly with re-inforcements. Don't lose heart. And for all those ladies to whom I am indebted, for half a ton of frilly silk and lacy linen — don't catch cold. Au revoir.

The balloon begins to gain height. ARGUS barks up at his master.

BARON
Stay, Argus. Stay! I'll soon be back.

41 INT. THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL DAWN

ANGLE ON a furious JACKSON and his FUNCTIONARIES as they watch the balloon and galleon rise out of the

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

hole in the theater roof. It floats across the square with its ruined church.

JACKSON
He won't get far on hot air and fantasy.

42 EXT. WITH THE BARON IN THE GALLEON EARLY MORNING

The BARON raises his hat in a florid and gracious salute to JACKSON and begins to jettison another sack of ballast. Suddenly, out of the sack topples SALLY. He grabs for her but it is too late. She falls away from him to her certain death.

The BARON looks down, horrified, only to discover that she has snagged onto the anchor which is suspended below the galleon on a length of rope.

The BARON hauls her back up into the galleon.

SALLY
(scared but trying not to show it)
Thanks.

BARON
(picking up a container of water)
You've ruined everything! ... I'll have to douse the fire to put you down! ... I'll never get off again! ...

SALLY
(stepping between the BARON and the brazier)
I'm going with you!

BARON
No you're not!

SALLY
I am!

BARON
I absolutely and utterly refuse!

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

SALLY
(pointing down, triumphant)
If we go down now, we'll land on the Turks.

CUT TO:

THE BARON'S P.O.V. as he looks over the side of the galleon just in time to see them pass over the battlements and drift out over the Turkish camp. A fierce battle is taking place all along the walls as the TURKS storm the town.

SALLY
(looking at the fighting)
We've got to find your servants and get back here quickly!

ANGLE ON the BARON peering through a telescope at a pale crescent moon (normal size), above them.

BARON
(irritated)
That *is* what I had in mind.

SALLY
Where are we going?

BARON
To the moon.

SALLY
What? . . . That'll take ages!

BARON
No it won't.

SALLY
Of course it will!

The BARON gives SALLY an exasperated look.

SALLY
Why are we going there?

BARON
That's where I last saw Berthold. Have you ever been to the moon?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

SALLY
No.

BARON
Ah! Interesting place. The King and Queen are charming. You know about their detachable heads don't you?

SALLY
No.

BARON
Ah. Yes. Moonlings can send their heads off separately for intellectual pursuits, while their bodies engage in more ... bodily activities. Trouble is, their heads and bodies don't always see eye to eye.

SALLY looks skeptical.

BARON
(mischievously)
You do believe me, don't you?

SALLY
(wary)
I'm doing my best.

The BARON smiles.

43 EXT. IN THE GALLEON NIGHT

The balloon is in the middle of a raging storm. Rain is pouring down, threatening to put out the fire in the brazier. Thunder and lightning are rolling and flashing all around. The galleon is really being thrown about. SALLY and the BARON are clinging to the rigging. In front of them is the crescent moon. It seems unnaturally large.

SALLY
(above the noise of the wind)
Are you scared?

BARON
(terrified)
Certainly not! Are you?

43 CONTINUED:

SALLY
(terrified)
Certainly not!

Suddenly a bolt of lightning blasts through the rigging, severing the ropes connecting the galleon to the balloon. The balloon in immediately blown off into space, leaving the galleon spinning and lurching on into the storm. The rain has now begun to behave like the sea, splashing up over the prow of the galleon which in turn has begun to move up and down as if on waves. The OLD SOLDIER and the LITTLE GIRL struggle together to gain control of their tiny craft as the monstrous storm hurls them onward. The crescent moon, in front of them, is now gigantic, filling nearly all of the sky and getting bigger. The storm begins to subside. Soon the galleon is sailing through a calm sea. This sea seems to drain away — sink into sand — until all the water has vanished and the boat is plying its way across what appears to be a desert ... the sand behaving like water.

44 EXT. SEA OF TRANQUILITY

In the little galleon the BARON lies exhausted, asleep. The BARON's arm hangs over the side — his fingers dragging in what now is definitely sand. He wakes, to find SALLY alert and ready to go.

SALLY
(enthusiastic)
We're here! You look different ... younger.

BARON
I always feel rejuvenated by a touch of adventure. For heaven's sake, don't *you* get any younger ... or I'll have to find a wet nurse.

45 APPROACHING STRUCTURE ON MOON DAY

The BARON and SALLY sail, in the galleon, across the sea of sand, towards a gigantic, open, metal, spherical structure (similar to an orrery) which lies imbedded in the ground. Through the great metal bands that compose this construction we can see the horizon ... except for one particular section that seems to

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

have part of a building inside. The BARON and SALLY sail directly towards this.

BARON
You'll find that I'm one of the King's special favorites. We'll receive a right royal welcome.

The moment that the BARON and SALLY sail into the interior of the gigantic sphere, the small building towards which they were heading is revealed to part of a huge impressive city. To make matters stranger, the buildings disassemble as they glide through them. Parts that appear to be distant prove to be in the foreground. Walls that seem to be at right angles to them are revealed to be at 45 degrees. Gigantic stone bases are in fact tiny pebbles directly in front of SALLY's nose. As they enter the city they hear the sound of welcoming brass bands and cheering crowds. SALLY looks around for the source of this noise but can't see any sign of life. She appeals to the BARON who smiles, shrugs, and begins to wave to the invisible crowd. SALLY obviously thinks that this is quite daft. They sail through this insubstantial city until they approach what seems to be the palace. A magnificent building rising at the end of a long avenue of equally impressive buildings. The music and cheering reach a crescendo as they suddenly, to their surprise, bump into the palace, which in fact, is just a painted cutout slightly taller than their boat. The buildings on either side of them are equally false, flat and pressing right up against the sides of the boat. A noise behind them spins them around and they see a fourth wall of buildings closing behind them. SALLY looks around in alarm and then in fear as she sees a gigantic floating head loom up over the wall. It belongs to the KING OF THE MOON.

KING'S HEAD
(his face straining and contorting)
I've got you at last. Bienvenu alla luna, Baron.

BARON
Your Majesty. What a great pleasure it is to see you again. May I introduce my friend, Sally. Sally, the King of the Moon. Well, his head at any rate.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

KING'S HEAD
I'm sorry, but I must insist on the correct title. King of *Everything*. Ray Di Tutto, but you can call me Ray. You know, the moon is a very insignificant part of my domain now. There is so much much much much much much more.

The KING'S FACE goes into a spasm of straining and contorting.

BARON
My old friend, you seem to be in some discomfort. What ails you?

KING'S HEAD
(irritated)
Nothing ails me! Can you not see that I am one with the cosmos?

BARON
Ah.

KING'S HEAD
Ah? I tell you that and all you can say is "Ah"? What, are you blind? Baron, let me explain to you.
(straining)
Since you were last here, I, that is, my head, that which is left of me, where the brilliant and important parts are located, is now ruling and governing the known universe. And that which I don't know, I create.
(he whistles)
I just created spring. Without me, there would be nothing, not even you ... "Cogito ergo es": I think, therefore you is.

The BARON and SALLY exchange looks.

SALLY
Your old friend's a lunatic.

BARON
(annoyed)
Without my *adventures* you wouldn't be here.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

KING'S HEAD
(triumphant)
So, I'm now part of your "adventures" am I? Well, we shall see about that, huh.

The KING'S HEAD thinks hard.

CUT TO:

THE BARON AND SALLY. Their surroundings have suddenly changed. The galleon and the walls of the city have disappeared, and they now find themselves, surrounded with splendid drawing-room furniture and fittings, stuck on top of a tall plinth. In effect, in a comfortable prison.

ANGLE ON the KING'S HEAD which is hovering in space beside the plinth.

KING'S HEAD
Who created who? I hope you'll be very comfortable. Ciao!

In the background, middle distance, we see the QUEEN and the KING'S BODY pass across the landscape. They are making rude noises and the KING'S BODY is clutching the QUEEN. The QUEEN is carrying a butterfly net.

KING'S HEAD
There goes my revolting body with the Queen. It's so embarrassing. Please don't look! Maybe he will go away. It's hard to believe my body and I were ever attached, we are so incompatible. I mean, he is still dangling from the food chain and I am in the stars ... oh, it is so unmetaphysical!

As the KING'S HEAD speaks a HAND reaches up from below, grabs the head and pulls it down.

KING'S HEAD
No, no, go away! I despise you, let me go! No, no, no!

ANGLE ON the KING and QUEEN standing beside the plinth. The KING'S BODY is still clutching at the

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

QUEEN with one hand while forcing his head back onto his body with his other hand. Attached to his belt is a sack of food. At the moment when the KING'S HEAD and BODY are reunited the KING seems to undergo a change of personality.

KING (reunited)
(belches)
I'm back! I've got my lips again
(to QUEEN)
and I'm going to use them, baby. It's me — I'm your elephant of joy. Let me bite you, baby.
(laughs)

QUEEN
Eat first, darling.

KING
That's right, you got to "muncha before you bitecha"!

CLOSE ON the KING holding his head onto his body and stuffing food into his mouth.

KING
(eating)
Mmm! Better! Better!
(hitting his head)
Pretentious, namby pamby head!

ANGLE ON the BARON, who has caught the QUEEN's eye.

BARON
(doffing hat to QUEEN)
Your most wondrous Majesty ...

KING
(interrupting)
I know you! You're the little guy who tried to take off with my queen last time you were here. We have no more of that — piccolo casanova!

CUT TO:

THE BARON and SALLY who are now not in the "comfortable" prison, but in a rough straw-filled cage, suspended in space.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON KING and QUEEN.

KING
(holding head on)
There you go, love birds. I'm sure you'll be very uncomfortable.

At this point, after a brief struggle, the KING's HEAD escapes from his body.

KING'S HEAD
(spitting out food)
I am free again. Free to concentrate on higher things!

The KING'S BODY jumps up and down with rage. It throws food, blindly, in the direction of the KING'S HEAD which is once more straining to exercise its will power, while sticking out its tongue at its enraged body.

KING'S HEAD
(dodging food missiles)
Troglodyte! I'm trying to concentrate on higher things! Go and amuse yourself in the slime!

A butterfly net comes up from below and captures the HEAD which it drags down out of shot.

KING'S HEAD
No! No! Let me go! I've got things to do! Tides to regulate! Comets to direct! I haven't got time for bodily functions or black leather posing briefs.

46 INT. CAGE ON MOON

ANGLE ON the cage suspended from below (world upside down) in a space which may or may not be recognizable as a cell, depending upon construction material already available. The cage contains the BARON and SALLY and a large pile of straw in the middle.

SALLY
(furious)
"One of the King's favorites?"

46 CONTINUED:

BARON
I can't understand it.

SALLY
He said the last time you were here you tried to make off with his Queen. Doesn't that ring a bell?

BARON
It's quite untrue. I er ... I was merely polite to her.

SALLY looks at the BARON with disgust.

BARON
I'm afraid the "King of Everything" has little regard for facts. Let this be a warning to you.

SALLY
(surly)
What do you mean?

BARON
This is the fate of those who ignore the truth.

SALLY
What is?

BARON
To end up ...

SALLY
(accusingly)
... In a cage on the moon?

BARON
This cage isn't real. It's just part of the King's lunacy.

SALLY
(kicking bar)
Seems strong enough to me.

BARON
(put out)
I see we're in a not very helpful frame of mind.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

SALLY
How are we supposed to save the town from here?

BARON
(embarrassed)
The town's perfectly all right. The present assault is over. Everyone there is quite safe.

SALLY
How do you know?

BARON
I just know.

47 EXT. THE CITY DAY

A very quick scene of ferocious hand-to-hand fighting along the city walls as waves of TURKS swarm up ladders and over the battlements and attack the DEFENDERS.

48 BACK IN THE CAGE ON THE MOON

SALLY is looking at the BARON skeptically. She kicks at the pile of straw lying on the floor of the cage.

VOICE
(from under straw)
Ow!

The BARON draws his saber.

BARON
Come out! ... Come out of there!

The BARON prods the straw with his saber.

VOICE
Ow! Stop that!

An OLD MAN with white hair and funny teeth emerges from under the straw.

OLD MAN
(indignant)
What'd you do that for?!!!

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

BARON
I beg your pardon, I thought you might be unfriendly.

OLD MAN
Of course I'm unfriendly! You'd be unfriendly if I prodded you!

SALLY
Who are you?

OLD MAN
(thinks)
I can't remember. I've been here so long.

SALLY
We'll be like that if we don't escape.

BARON
Why are you here?

OLD MAN
Oh, I'm a very wicked criminal.

SALLY
What have you done?

OLD MAN
I can't remember

SALLY
Then how do you know you're very wicked?

OLD MAN
Well, for one thing ... I'm in here. And for another ... I've got these shackles on.

The OLD MAN steps out of the straw dragging shackles with him. These are in fact BERTHOLD's weights.

BARON
(excited)
Berthold!!!

BERTHOLD
(to SALLY)
Eh?

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

BARON
(to SALLY)
It's Berthold!!!

The BARON leaps forward and embraces BERTHOLD. (BERTHOLD is played, once again, by DESMOND from Salt's theater company, but this time not in heavy theatrical make-up. In other words he is more "real" as BERTHOLD than he was in the Sultan's Tale. He is also much older.)

BARON
Berthold! It's me! ... The Baron! I knew I'd find you on the moon! We're going to take you back to earth, to help us fight the Sultan.

BERTHOLD tries to fight off the BARON's embraces.

BERTHOLD
Get off! ... Get off me! ...

BARON
You're Berthold, Berthold my old servant. Those leg irons are to slow you down ... Stop you tearing off all over the place ...

BERTHOLD
You must be joking.

BARON
You always wore them ... Remember?

BERTHOLD
You're crackers.

BARON
I'm Baron Munchausen.

BERTHOLD
That sounds nasty. Is it contagious?

SALLY
We're wasting time!

ARIADNE (V.O.)
(sexily)
Baron.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

The BARON, SALLY, and BERTHOLD look towards the direction of the voice.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON the cage as ARIADNE's HEAD hovers into view.

BARON
(delighted)
Ariadne?

ARIADNE
(key to cage in her mouth)
Darling Baron. I'm sorry I couldn't speak to you before but Roger's so difficult.

ARIADNE unlocks the door of the cage by inserting the key into the lock with her teeth and rotating her head 360 degrees.

ARIADNE
(opening the cage door still with teeth)
You're much too handsome to languish in a cage.

BARON
(forced casual)
Where exactly is Roger?

ARIADNE
He's in bed with my body.
(orgasmic)
Ooooh ... Stop it! ... But if he discovers that my head's with you ... Ahhh ... Quickly, climb into my hair! Oooaaahh! Oooooaaaeee!

ARIADNE positions her head against the open door of the cage.

SALLY
(aside to BARON)
Why is she making those funny noises?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

BARON
(embarrassed)
Her body's with the King and ... he's tickling her feet.
(turning quickly to Berthold)
Berthold!

The BARON drags BERTHOLD out of the pile of giant straw.

BARON
Come on!

BERTHOLD
(struggling)
Let go of me! ...

BARON
You're coming with us.

BERTHOLD
No chance!

BARON
Why not?

BERTHOLD
(thinks)
Can't remember.

BARON
You're not frightened, are you?

BERTHOLD
That's it!

BARON
(to SALLY)
Help me.

The BARON and SALLY bundle the struggling BERTHOLD out of the cage and onto ARIADNE's head where they cling to her hair and crown.

ARIADNE'S HEAD with the BARON and CO. on board then zooms out of shot.

49 EXT. MOONSCAPE DAY

A moonscape full of abandoned, half-finished buildings and structures. The QUEEN'S HEAD zooms across it, carrying the BARON, SALLY, and BERTHOLD.

ARIADNE
Oh oh oh oh aaaah. Oooooh!

CUT TO

THE BARON, SALLY AND BERTHOLD as they climb down from ARIADNE'S HEAD.

ARIADNE
Ah, ah, ah, aaaaaah! Oh, Baron, I must get back to Roger before he notices I'm headless.

BARON
I quite understand.

ARIADNE
(suddenly passionate)
Darling ... take me with you!

BARON
(taken aback)
My dear ... Back to earth?

ARIADNE
Yes.

BARON
Er ... Without your body?

ARIADNE
(hurt)
I thought you loved me for myself?

BARON
Oh, I did, I mean I do, of course I do. It's just that ...

SALLY
(sick of this)
We've got to go!

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

ARIADNE
No, you're right, it's impossible ... it was just a mad thought ... Here ... take a lock of my hair.

The BARON takes out his saber and cuts a six-foot lock of ARIADNE's hair which he ties around his neck like a long scarf.

BERTHOLD
Just a lock, cocky! Not the whole carpet!

BARON
I shall treasure it, always.

ARIADNE
Ooooooooooh ... ! Aaaaaaaaaaah ... ! The King's ... Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaa ... ! I must go back. OOOOOOOOOOH ... ! Au revoir dear Baron ... AAAAAAAAAAH ...! OO, OO, OO, OO, AAH! Good luck! AAAAAAAAAH!

The BARON plucks a red paper rose from inside his jacket and puts it between ARIADNE's teeth.

ARIADNE'S HEAD zooms out of shot.

REVERSE ANGLE ON ARIADNE'S HEAD as it shoots away from the BARON, SALLY and BERTHOLD.

ARIADNE
I'm coming Roger, I'm coming. OOOOOOOOAAAAAAAAOOOOOOO ... !

10 **INT. KING'S BEDROOM DAY**

The KING is tickling the QUEEN's feet. The QUEEN's body is moving under the bedclothes.

KING
Ticky, ticky, ticky, ticky, ... etc.

The KING crawls under the bedclothes at the bottom end of the bed and begins to move up towards where the QUEEN's head should be. KING is holding his head on.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

KING
(under bedclothes)
Ticky, ticky, ticky, ticky ...

The KING suddenly stops and sticks his head out of the side of the covers.

KING
What's up with you today? Not a peep, not a murmur! You're about as responsive as a dead haddock! Don't tell me you've got another headache! Eh? ... There's nothing wrong with my tickling, girl, I can tell you that! I'm as good as ever! Better! I'm tickling now, longer, stronger, more effectively than I ever was! Practice makes perfect ... Give us a kiss.

The KING continues under the covers until he reaches the QUEEN's headless neck.

KING
Good god, where's your head?!
(he rummages in the bedclothes)
You can't have a headache without a head.
(sudden realization)
It's with the Baron, isn't it?! I'll kill him! I'll tear him to shreds!

The KING snatches the arm of an eighteenth century record/disc/cylinder music box which instantly silences the moon muzak which has been playing until this moment.

KING
Fetch me my radish club and celery sword! ... Rats, they're out of season! OK, OK, bring the asparagus spear! The deadliest vegetable in my arsenal! I'll teach the bounder!
(pause)
Fine, fine, I'll get it myself! Who am I kidding! Not only are there no servants here, but they're all totally incompetent! SILVER! SILVER! TIME FOR DINNER!

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

At this point, Terry Gilliam does his vocal impression of giant griffin and a GIANT, TALONED GRIFFIN foot smashes through the door, window or wall (depending upon what's available from what has already been built).

KING
Mind the paintwork! You clumsy brute!

51 EXT. MOONSCAPE DAY

THE BARON AND CO. struggle across the moon, away from the palace, past the abandoned, half-finished buildings and structures. We hear the blast of a distant hunting horn. The BARON and CO. look back towards the directions of the palace.

CUT TO:

THE BARON AND CO.'S P.O.V. where we see, hovering over the palace, a mounted THREE-HEADED GRIFFIN.

CUT TO:

A CLOSEUP of the GRIFFIN which we discover is being ridden by the KING, armed with a mushroom shield and asparagus spear.

KING
(steadying the griffin)
Hungry are we, Silver? Well, down there are three tasty wee snacks. Go get 'em!

The KING spurs the GRIFFIN, which roars, rears back and then zooms away with much snarling of flared nostrils and beating of wings.

CUT TO:

THE BARON AND CO. as they try to run faster.

BARON
Faster!

SALLY
(frantic)
We can't! Berthold can hardly move!

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

BARON
Take his weights off!

SALLY
I have!

BARON
(puzzled)
What?

The BARON looks at BERTHOLD who is indeed without his weights.

SALLY
He's old! He can't run any more!

BARON
Nonsense! He's just out of practice!
Come on, Berthold!

SALLY glances back towards the fast gaining GRIFFIN.

SALLY
(scared)
It's going to catch us!

ANGLE ON the KING as he spurs on the GRIFFIN and raises and throws his asparagus spear.

ANGLE ON the BARON and CO., who are now moving a tiny bit faster, as the asparagus spear shoots overhead and thumps into the ground just in front of BERTHOLD. BERTHOLD, glancing fearfully back at the approaching GRIFFIN, runs smack into the quivering asparagus spear and knocks himself out. The BARON and SALLY stop running and return the few steps to try and help BERTHOLD. At this point they fall into the shadow of the noisy GRIFFIN.

ANGLE ON the KING as the maddened, starving GRIFFIN goes into a dive.

ANGLE ON the BARON and CO. as the BARON signals to SALLY that he wants her to run in one direction while he intends to run in the other.

CUT TO:

A WIDE SHOT of the scene in which the BARON and SALLY run in opposite directions leaving the unconscious

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

BERTHOLD in the middle. The GRIFFIN's heads fan out, each one following a different potential meal. The. KING tries desperately to control them.

KING
Whoa! Together! Together! Teamwork! Teamwork!

The out-of-control GRIFFIN is stretching, straining, shuddering until its body can no longer hold itself together. RIP! SPRONG! ZIP! POP! BOING! The GRIFFIN comes apart! Springs, gears, all sorts of clockwork mechanism fly out. One head and wing spiral up and away. Feathers fill the air. What remains of the body — with the KING frantically trying to rein it in — hurtles to the ground. On impact the KING'S head bounces and shoots off into space.

KING'S HEAD
(receding fast)
Free! Free! At last! The body's dead! Finished! I can concentrate on my great task! Pure thought! A head can live without a body, can't it? I shall prove it! I shall definitely prove it. One doesn't have to *have* to wash one's hair!

The KING'S HEAD disappears. As the feathers and dust clear, SALLY and the BARON make their way back to BERTHOLD as he regains consciousness.

BERTHOLD
(recovering)
Baron! Baron Munchausen!

BERTHOLD embraces the BARON, who has to fight him off.

BERTHOLD
It's great to see you! What are you doing here?

BARON
(pushing him away)
Let go of me.

BERTHOLD
It's Berthold — Berthold. Your old servant. Remember?

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

BARON
(tetchily)
Yes, yes. We've been through all that.

BERTHOLD
Oh! Where are we?

SALLY
On the moon.

BERTHOLD
Oh yeah? Same old Baron, eh?

SALLY
Can we go now?

BARON
(giving some of Ariadne's hair to Sally)
Get weaving.

BERTHOLD
Hang on, hang on, it's all coming back. I've been stuck here for over twenty years ... since the last time you were on the moon! You abandoned me here! You swine! You toddled off with the Queen of tarts and left me to rot in that parrot cage, didn't you?! And now you come back when it suits you, having wasted half my life, and expect me to follow you to the ends of the earth.

BARON
Yes.

BERTHOLD
Oh, all right.

They move off. BERTHOLD with difficulty.

52 **EXT. CRESCENT MOON**

The BARON and CO. move across the moonscape towards what has now become the horn of a crescent moon, weaving Ariadne's hair as they go.

53 EXT. TIP OF CRESCENT MOON

The BARON and CO. reach the point of the crescent. They have to balance carefully to avoid falling off. By now, Ariadne's hair has become a recognizable rope.

The BARON attaches one end of the rope to the horn, and drops the rest of it into the abyss.

BARON
Berthold, you go first. Then you, Sally.

BERTHOLD and SALLY, followed by the BARON, slip off the edge of the crescent moon and climb down the hair rope into space.

BARON
Berthold? Do you know where the rest of the gang are?

BERTHOLD
Not a clue.

54 EXT. ROPE IN SPACE

ANGLE ON the bottom end of the hair rope as it dangles in space. After a moment BERTHOLD climbs down to it.

BERTHOLD
(shouting up hysterically)
That's it! Finito! There's no more rope! Mind out! I'm coming back up!

BARON (V.O.)
(from above)
Wait a moment!
(pause)
Here! Tie this to it!

Another end of rope is passed down to BERTHOLD.

BERTHOLD
(puzzled, examining the rope)
Where'd you get this from?

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

BARON (V.O.)
I untied it from the top.

BERTHOLD
(confused)
From the top?

BARON (V.O.)
Naturally ... Where else do you think I'd get it from?

BERTHOLD
But ...

BARON (V.O.)
(exasperated)
Yes yes yes ... Hurry up and splice it to the bottom, so that we may continue our descent!

BERTHOLD
Oh, very clever. Great. Why didn't I think of that!
(to SALLY)
That's why he's a Baron and I'm a prole.

CUT TO:

A WIDE SHOT of the BARON and CO. climbing down the rope. Far below them, in the blackness of space, is the earth's sphere.

ANGLE ON SALLY as she slides down the fraying hair rope.

SALLY
The rope's fraying!

ANGLE ON BERTHOLD as the rope comes apart in his hands.

BERTHOLD
I'll say! Ahhhhhhh!

BERTHOLD falls out of frame, followed by SALLY and the BARON.

55 **EXT. BARON AND CO. FALL THROUGH SPACE**

The BARON and CO. fall through space towards the planet Earth which appears to be increasing in size beneath them.

SALLY
(terrified)
We'll never rescue them now, will we?!

They continue towards the Earth on which we see a volcano from where smoke is pouring.

56 **INT. VULCAN'S WORKSHOP INSIDE THE VOLCANO**

A vast cavernous rock chamber inside the volcano at one end of which is a large open blacksmith's furnace. There is no blazing fire in the furnace and all the machinery is still. Surrounding the furnace are anvils and workbenches with racks of hammers and other tools. On and around the benches are pieces of armor, swords, cannons and small arms in various stages of completion.

In front of the furnace stands an apparently giant, muscular MAN, stripped to the waist. He is picking up and throwing coal at a group of about fifty leather-aproned, giant CYCLOPEAN MEN.

The CYCLOPES are parrying the "coal" missiles and throwing them back at the muscular MAN. They all seem very angry. The muscular MAN and the CYCLOPES are shouting at each other.

VULCAN
(throwing coal)
Two and a half percent on the basic rate is my final offer!

CYCLOPES
Five percent on the basic rate! ...
And a separate agreement for overtime!
... Six percent! ... No deal without an agreement on early retirement! ...
Ten percent! ...
And new shift arrangements!
Five percent or no increased production! ... Etc.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

VULCAN
(hurling coal)
Two and a half percent! Take it or leave it!

The fighting continues.

CUT TO:

THE BARON AND CO. as they fall from the open chimney in the roof of Vulcan's chamber and crash to the floor, making a crater in it.

ANGLE ON VULCAN and the CYCLOPES as they hear and see the BARON and CO. land at the other end of the chamber. They stop fighting.

ANGLE ON the BARON and CO.

SALLY
(opening tightly clenched eyes. Amazed)
I'm still in one piece ...
(trying arms and legs)
I think.

BARON
(matter of fact)
I can't imagine why. Our descent into what I take to be the volcano of Mount Etna should have been slowed by a rising cushion of warm air. But the damned thing seems to have gone out.

BERTHOLD
Oh, no, not more giants!

CUT TO:

BERTHOLD'S P.O.V. of VULCAN and the CYCLOPES as they approach threateningly. They are all wielding hammers and pokers and lumps of metal, and look gigantic.

ANGLE ON the BARON and CO. as they watch the approaching "giants."

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

BERTHOLD
I've got nothing against giants personally ...

CUT TO:

THE BARON AND CO.'S P.O.V. of VULCAN and the CYCLOPS as they get nearer and bigger.

ANGLE ON the BARON and CO. in their crater.

BERTHOLD
Some of my best friends are giants ... if only they weren't so big.

CUT TO:

THE BARON AND CO.'S P.O.V. of VULCAN and the CYCLOPES as they stop a few yards away. They seem massive.

CUT TO:

A WIDE SHOT of the BARON and CO. confronted by VULCAN and the CYCLOPES. We see that VULCAN and the CYCLOPES are actually very small, and that the BARON, when he climbs out of the crater, towers over them.

VULCAN
(suspiciously)
Can I help you tiny mortals?

BARON
I sincerely hope so. I am Baron Munchausen — you may have heard of me ... My friends and I are looking for three men. One with exceptional eyesight, one with superb hearing and powerful lungs, and one who's extremely large and strong.

VULCAN
We're *all* extremely large and strong here. I'm Vulcan, the god. And these are my giant employees, the Cyclopes.
(shouting violently at the CYCLOPES)
Who are, even now, going back to work!!!

57 **INT. VULCAN'S WORKSHOP AREA**

VULCAN conducts the BARON and CO. through his workshop, past armor, swords, cannon.

VULCAN
I'm willing to supply arms and equipment to anybody that's prepared to pay the price. Greeks, Trojans, Romans, Huns ... It's not my fault if they're crazy enough to slaughter each other, is it?
(to CYCLOPES)
You manky crew! Your go slows don't impress me! I'm God! I've got all the time in the universe, here! All the time, me!
(to BARON)
In the old days the staff used to get paid, on the dot, every thousand years. This lot expect them every century! Agh! It's outrageous!

BARON
(indicating an impressive rudimentary rocket)
What is that?

VULCAN
This is our prototype ... RX, er, intercontinental, radar sneaky, multi war-headed, nuclear missile.

BARON
(bemused)
Ah ... What does it do?

VULCAN
Kills the enemy.

BARON
(impressed)
All the enemy?

VULCAN
Aye, all of them. And all their wives, and all their children, and all their sheep and cattle, and cats and dogs.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

VULCAN (CONT.)
All of them. All of them gone for good.

SALLY
That's horrible.

VULCAN
Well, you see, the advantage is you don't have to see a single one of them die. You see, I just sit comfortably, thousands of miles away from the battlefield, and simply press the button.

BERTHOLD
Well, where's the fun in that?

VULCAN
Oh, we cater for all sorts here. You'd be surprised.

BARON
It'll never sell. It's unnatural. It's unchivalrous.

VULCAN
(knowingly)
It'll sell all right. But it is a bit before its time. It won't go into production, that one, for another couple of hundred years. Come and have some fodder.

58 **INT. VULCAN'S DINING ROOM**

The BARON and CO. are sitting at a table with VULCAN. The table, chairs and all the room decorations are made of gold and encrusted with huge diamonds and other precious stones. Fabulous diamond chandeliers hang from the ceiling. The walls are mirrored. In one corner of the room is one cow. On the table are demi-tasse cups and a golden tea pot.

BARON
(sipping from cup)
Mmm. Delicious.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

VULCAN
(swigging)
Aye, it's not a bad drop of tea as far as nectar of the Gods goes ... You can stay here for as long as you like ... It's nice to have fresh company for tea.

BARON
(reaching for the teapot)
Thank you. It'll be a pleasure.

SALLY
(for the BARON's benefit)
I'm sorry, but we have to go soon ... We're in a hurry.

The door of the dining room opens and ALBRECHT (played by BILL) enters pushing a gold trolley loaded with plates full of dainty cakes. He is dressed like a cross between a maid and a butler and is old and rather decrepit.

VULCAN
Oh, here comes my midget man-servant with the petits fours.

BERTHOLD
ALBRECHT!

BARON
ALBRECHT!

ALBRECHT
(amazed)
Baron! Berthold! What are you doing here?

BARON
Looking for you.

ALBRECHT
(guiltily)
I haven't got the treasure any more ... I've spent it. Er, I mean, I gave it all to charity.
(indicating the jewel-encrusted room)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

BARON
I don't want the treasure ... Albrecht, this is Sally ... Sally, Albrecht.

SALLY
(encouraged)
Hello.

BARON
I want you to come and help us fight the Turk again.

ALBRECHT
Oh ... I couldn't do that. Not now ... Not since I found myself.

The BARON, SALLY and BERTHOLD exchange looks, ALBRECHT begins to set out the plates of tiny cakes.

ALBRECHT
No, not since I found myself. No. No, I really, no. I never really wanted to be big and strong and lug heavy things about ... No. I now know I want to be dainty ... and sensitive. They call me their midget down here ... I love it ... It's bliss.

ALBRECHT continues to unload the trolley.

BERTHOLD
(to the BARON)
He's gone funny.

At this point, wind begins to swirl about them. Celestial MUSIC starts and the light becomes even more brilliant. As the music swells, a shell, accompanied by CHERUBS, rises from a pool of water. The shell opens, revealing a beautiful naked GIRL (played by ROSE) standing exactly like Botticelli's Venus. HANDMAIDENS appear, borne on the wind from somewhere in the room and flutter around her with her robes ... and then are gone ... along with the MUSIC, CHERUBS and wind. VULCAN, the BARON and BERTHOLD spring to their feet. VENUS is now dressed and seated in the great shell.

VENUS
(simply)
Hello.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

VULCAN
(obviously besotted)
Darling, dearest, this is Baron Munchausen and his friends, Sally and Berthold ...
(to the BARON and CO.)
This is Venus, the Goddess, and my wife.

BARON
(gobsmacked)
Madam ... I am overwhelmed ...

VULCAN
(fumbling in the pocket of his apron)
Oh ... oh ... My love ... my life ... the alpha and omega of my existence ... I've got something here for you.

VULCAN takes a lump of coal from his pocket and proceeds to crush it with both hands. There is a flash of lightning from the coal, and VULCAN opens his dirty hands to reveal a large gleaming diamond.

VULCAN
(giving the diamond to VENUS)
There's a diamond for you, my precious.

VENUS takes the diamond and pecks VULCAN on the cheek.

VENUS
You're so sweet.
(giving the diamond to a HANDMAIDEN)
Another diamond.

BARON
(mouth dry, knees trembling)
Madam ... I am, alas, unable to offer you so splendid a gift ... But allow me to say ... that you excel in beauty even the magnificent Catherine the Great of Russia ...

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

BERTHOLD
Here we go.

BARON
... whose hand in marriage I once had the honor of declining.

VENUS
(flirting heavily)
Baron, you flatter me.

BARON
Not one jot, Madam ... not one tittle.

VENUS
(seductively)
What a handsome moustache ...

VENUS sways closer to the BARON who ineluctably reciprocates. It looks like mad uncontrollable love at first sight. VENUS takes the BARON by the arm and begins to draw him away from the others.

VENUS
(to the BARON)
Shall we dance?

The BARON and VENUS glide across the dining room, as if borne on the wind. VENUS guides them towards a door. As they go, a short burst of steam shoots from one of VULCAN's ears, betraying his rising pressure. Otherwise, he is trying hard to retain a smile and remain calm and friendly. However, BERTHOLD sees the steam and susses the situation. He and SALLY exchange worried looks.

As the BARON and VENUS go through the door we hear the sound of an orchestra striking up a waltz.

VULCAN
(with rictus smile, to BERTHOLD and SALLY)
Come and see the ballroom.

59 INT. VULCAN'S BALLROOM

ANGLE ON the BARON and VENUS who are dancing two feet above the floor and gaining height. The ballroom is a

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

beautiful dome supported by columns — looking much like a Greek temple — floating in the middle of a pool of water. The pool is ringed with waterfalls and cascades rising into the darkness of this subterranean grotto. The interior of the dome is painted with a beautiful Baroque sky and great crystal chandeliers hang from it.

60 **INT. ENTRANCE TO VULCAN'S BALLROOM**

ANGLE ON VULCAN, SALLY, BERTHOLD and ALBRECHT as they arrive at the door to the ballroom, and look in. On seeing the BARON and VENUS dancing at their present altitude, VULCAN's pressure clearly increases, and jets of steam escape from both ears.

VULCAN
(indicating ballroom, fighting rage)
Nice, isn't it? ... We've just had it done.

61 **INT. VULCAN'S BALLROOM—VULCAN'S POINT OF VIEW**

Of the BARON and VENUS as they sweep through the air and continue to rise.

62 **INT. ENTRANCE TO VULCAN'S BALLROOM**

ANGLE ON VULCAN and the others in the doorway as a particularly strong jet of steam shoots up from under VULCAN's collar.

BERTHOLD
(to VULCAN, with forced jollity)
I can dance! Here, watch this!

To SALLY's embarrassment, BERTHOLD removes a comb from the hair of one of the HANDMAIDENS, takes a piece of paper from one of the petits fours and begins to blow on it, accompanying himself in an extraordinary sort of silent tap routine in an attempt to distract VULCAN.

VULCAN watches BERTHOLD's uncanny display with

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

fascination, as BERTHOLD lures him away from the ballroom door. However, BERTHOLD doesn't have much stamina, and he soon begins to flag.

BERTHOLD
(to SALLY, desperate for a rest)
Sally! ... You can dance, can't you?

SALLY
(firmly)
No.

BERTHOLD
(knackered, but keeping going)
Thanks.

SALLY suddenly decides to take control of the situation, and she marches into the ballroom.

63 **INT. VULCAN'S BALLROOM**

ANGLE ON SALLY as she stomps into the ballroom. The BARON and VENUS are now waltzing amongst the chandeliers. Their heads are just below the Baroque ceiling — gloriously painted with clouds and cherubs — and they are gazing rapturously into each other's eyes. SALLY runs around, keeping below them.

SALLY
(shouting up)
Hey! ... Stop! ... Come down! ... Stop it! ... We've got to go!

The BARON and VENUS continue dancing, oblivious of everything except each other. The BARON has become perceptibly younger.

SALLY
We've got to get back and save the town! ... Please! ... Baron! ...

BARON
(looking down)
Don't fret. The town is in no immediate danger.

64 **EXT. BESIEGED CITY**

The town square where CITIZENS and SOLDIERS are desperately trying to barricade the gates and prevent them from being battered down by the TURKS.

65 **INT. VULCAN'S BALLROOM**

SALLY looks with suspicion at the BARON. She is unconvinced. The BARON and VENUS continue dancing but move together and lock in a passionate embrace. The sky is no longer a painting ... but real. This is the final straw for SALLY, and she stops running below the BARON and VENUS, stands for a moment glaring up at them, and then stomps back into the dining room.

66 **INT. VULCAN'S DINING ROOM**

ANGLE ON SALLY as she enters the dining room. BERTHOLD is still doing his grotesque VULCAN-distracting dance, but is within seconds of collapse.

SALLY
(to VULCAN)
The Baron's kissing your wife!

BERTHOLD falls over in a lather of sweat, while VULCAN changes color (as if hardening and tempering). Steam, smoke and flames, shoot from the top of his head. He storms into the ballroom.

67 **INT. VULCAN'S BALLROOM**

The BARON and VENUS are dancing among the clouds. Two winged CHERUBS fly around them, about to entwine them with a long satin banner. The BARON (looking even younger) is about to present VENUS with a paper rose, when ...

VULCAN
(off camera)
HARLOT! WHORE!

His roar shatters the scene. The clouds turn stormy. One of the CHERUBS drops his end of the banner, which falls towards VULCAN who stands far below them. VULCAN grabs the end of the banner, violently wrenching the

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

BARON and VENUS (who are entwined by the material) out of the sky.

VULCAN
That's enough of that.

Enraged he tries to disentangle the BARON and VENUS from the banner.

VULCAN
You strumpet!

VENUS
(trying to calm him)
Darling ...

VULCAN
Don't you "darling" me ... you hussy! ...
(to the BARON)
And as for you! ...

VULCAN holds the BARON above him with one hand as BERTHOLD and ALBRECHT look on appalled.

BERTHOLD
(to ALBRECHT)
Do something! Save him!

ALBRECHT
(dithering)
Er ...

VENUS
Darling ... Please! ... Don't be jealous!

VULCAN
I'm not jealous!

VENUS
(teasing)
You never let me have any friends.

BERTHOLD nudges ALBRECHT as VULCAN with the BARON held above him storms out of the ballroom with VENUS in pursuit.

ALBRECHT
(more dithering)
Er ...

68 INT. DINING ROOM

VULCAN
I won't have you wiggling at philanderers! You floozy!

VENUS
(outraged)
Floozy!?

BARON
(intervening)
Sir, I assure you ...

VENUS
Floozy! I'm a goddess! I can do what I like!

VULCAN
And I'm *the* god! So shut up!

VULCAN charges out of the dining room with the BARON. The others give chase.

69 INT. A CORNER OF VULCAN'S WORKSHOP

ANGLE ON VULCAN as he arrives, carrying the BARON, at the edge of a hole in the floor in a corner of his workshop. VENUS, SALLY, BERTHOLD, and ALBRECHT are seconds behind him. BERTHOLD pushes ALBRECHT forward.

BARON
I must insist that the lady is blameless ...

VULCAN
(to the BARON)
Ungrateful mortal! ...

ALBRECHT
Er ... Sir ... Vulcan ... Excuse me ...

VULCAN
(to the BARON)
You'll pay for this!!

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

ALBRECHT
(to VULCAN)
Why don't we just all sit down quietly and ...

VULCAN heaves the BARON into the hole, the still-entangled banner streaming behind. As he does so, ALBRECHT reaches out and grabs for the end of the banner.

ALBRECHT
(reasonable)
Now let's not be too hasty ... Ahhh!

The BARON's momentum carries ALBRECHT into the hole with him.

SALLY
(to VULCAN, horrified)
What have you done to them?!

VENUS
(to VULCAN)
You small-minded petit bourgeois ...

VULCAN
Shut up, you trollop!

BERTHOLD
What have you done to the Baron ...

VULCAN
You want the Baron? ... You can have the Baron!

VULCAN picks up SALLY and BERTHOLD and drops them down the hole. VULCAN and VENUS are left staring at each other.

VENUS
(seductively)
Did you enjoy that? Did I ... excite you?

VULCAN
Yes ... Very much.

They embrace passionately. All the furnaces flare up in unison, and all the machinery starts up.

70 INT. FALLING THROUGH THE VORTEX INTO SOUTH SEAS

ANGLE ON the BARON, SALLY, BERTHOLD and ALBRECHT as they fall through the center of the world, passing from dim light to bright light and back again.

71 EXT. UNDERWATER WORLD

ANGLE ON the underside of an enormous underwater rock overhang. From a crevice the BARON and CO. appear, continuing their fall in this, now open and empty, sub-aqueous world. It continues to get lighter as they plummet. Suddenly BERTHOLD breaks through a shimmering surface below him. PANIC! It's as if he has burst through the bottom of the vast bubble that encloses this watery world. His legs dangle in the void below the water. Desperately he struggles to swim upwards into the safety of the water. The others too are struggling to avoid dropping into the void. The others too are struggling to avoid dropping into the void. BERTHOLD is exhausting himself in his struggle when a fish swims nonchalantly by ... upside down. BERTHOLD suddenly realizes their predicament ... turns over and looks out of the water into the void. He can see the others' legs and bums hanging out of the water as they struggle ... He can also see the void is in fact the sky. They have fallen through the world and are merely upside down in the South Seas.

ANGLE ON the surface of the sea as the BARON and CO. right themselves and break the surface, gasping for air.

BERTHOLD
(coming to a new realization)
Oh, damn! I can't swim!
(he begins flailing about madly)

SALLY
What's happening!? ... You've got old again!

BARON
(looking old again and miserable, holding the, now
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

BARON (CONT.)
wet, limp, rose,
intended for Venus)
Well, what do you expect? I've just been expelled from a state of bliss ... And it's all your fault ...

SALLY
(to the BARON)
Where are we?
(Pause. Splashing the BARON:)
Answer me!!!

BARON
(glum)
The most probable explanation, if you're not an incurable skeptic, is that we've fallen through the center of the world and come out on the opposite side ... Somewhere in the South Seas.

SALLY
(appalled)
But that's miles away!

BARON
Oh, well done! It's as good a place to die as any.

ALBRECHT
(upset, floating)
I was happy in my volcano! ...

BARON
So was I!

BERTHOLD
(paddling desperately)
Anyone keen to win a medal for lifesaving?

ALBRECHT
Don't struggle. Float naturally.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

BERTHOLD
(drowning)
I don't float naturally! I sink naturally!

SALLY
Look!

CUT TO:

SALLY'S P.O.V. of what appears, in the distance, to be a long black island.

SALLY (V.O.)
An island!

ALBRECHT (V.O.)
Is there a volcano on it?

BERTHOLD
Oh shut up about your poxy volcano!

We see a fountain of something shooting up into the air form the middle of the island.

SALLY (V.O.)
(surprised)
I think there *is* a volcano on it.

The island seems to grow and change shape.

SALLY (V.O.)
(shock horror)
It's moving!!!

As the island rises it seems to develop a huge pair of eyes which emerge from under the sea.

ANGLE ON the BARON and CO.

BERTHOLD
(terrified)
I spy with my little eye something beginning with "M."

ALBRECHT
(hysterical)
It's a demon of the deep!!!

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

BERTHOLD
That begins with a "D," you klutz!
It's "M," for monster.

SALLY
Will it eat us?

BARON
(low)
With any luck.

Suddenly, with a rush of water, two vast pink fleshy walls, lined with teeth, shoot up vertically on either side of the BARON and CO. BERTHOLD, ALBRECHT and SALLY shout and scream. They are completely engulfed. The giant fish closes its mouth around them, continues gracefully through the arch of its leap, and dives out of sight.

72 INT. IN THE STOMACH OF THE GIANT FISH

ANGLE ON SALLY clinging to a spar of rotten wood in a torrent of swirling water. The water level begins to drop rapidly, leaving SALLY hanging onto what we now see is the skeleton of a large shipwreck. The receding water deposits the half-drowned BERTHOLD and ALBRECHT in the wreckage, close to SALLY. High overhead is the dripping vault of the fish's stomach. SALLY, finding that BERTHOLD and ALBRECHT are safe, looks around for the BARON. She sees him, hanging, inert, from a rotten spar. He is still clutching the rose which he tried to give to Venus.

SALLY, followed by ALBRECHT and BERTHOLD, scrambles over the wreckage to the BARON.

ALBRECHT
I think he's dead.

SALLY
(beside herself)
He can't be dead!

The BARON gives a groan as ALBRECHT and BERTHOLD lift him down to the base of the wreckage. SALLY is very relieved.

ALBRECHT
He's not very perky, is he?

(CONTINUED)

BERTHOLD
Hm. Is there a doctor in the fish?

BARON
(mumbles)
No doctors ... no doctors ...

The BARON sniffs the rose and faints.

SALLY
(matronly)
We've got to get him warm and dry.

ALBRECHT
(looking around)
Maybe there's a volcano in here.

BERTHOLD
Good heavens! All these years and I never knew the anatomy of fish was your speciality.

SALLY
(pointing through the gloom)
There's something glowing over there.

CUT TO:

SALLY'S P.O.V. where we see a large, dark, looming shape in the middle distance. Near the top of the shape is what appears to be a lit window.

ANGLE on the BARON and CO.

SALLY
Come on.

ALBRECHT and BERTHOLD pick up the BARON and begin to follow SALLY through knee-deep water towards the light.

Approaching the dark shape, SALLY and CO. discover it to be a heap of wrecked ships piled one on top of the other. The ships at the bottom of the pile, which are full of holes, are supported and kept upright by wooden props. A huge, sinister, ship's figurehead peers down at SALLY and CO. as they wind their way, beneath the carcasses of the rotting ships to the source of light, which is coming from windows high on

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

the hull of an ancient galleon called the "Sargasso Sea." They hear a distant dirge-like singing.

SALLY
(looking up at the lights and shouting)
Hello!

Pause. The singing continues.

BERTHOLD
(shouting louder)
Ahoy there!

Pause. The singing continues.

ALBRECHT
(nervous)
I don't like this.

73 INT. GIANT FISH — SHIP DECK

ANGLE ON SALLY followed by BERTHOLD and ALBRECHT carrying the BARON, as they climb crude, rickety, wooden steps onto the deck of the galleon. The deck is strewn with broken rigging and ship's gear. They look around for a moment before SALLY leads them towards a smashed doorway leading into the poop.

ALBRECHT
(frightened)
Don't go in there.

SALLY
(indicating the BARON)
We need help.

SALLY continues through the doorway — the OTHERS follow.

74 INT. GIANT FISH — INSIDE SHIP

SALLY and CO. enter a dark room from where a ladder leads through a trap door to a cabin above which seems to be where the light is coming from. SALLY and CO. struggle up the ladder until, looking into the illuminated cabin, they see the ship's CAPTAIN and a group of SAILORS, slowly, lethargically, playing cards

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

around a table. An OLD SAILOR is sitting in the corner with his hands cupped to his ears, singing the awful shanty dirge.

Throughout the action we hear:

OLD SAILOR
(singing)
Oh once I had a sweetheart,
A sweetheart once I had,
She was the fairest beauty true,
Her eyes were like the ocean blue,
But her name was Davy Jones, O,
Her name was Davy Jones.

Oh once I had a sweetheart,
A sweetheart once I had,
She was the truest beauty fair,
Gold was the color of her hair
But her name was Davy Jones, O,
Her name was Davy Jones.

Oh once I had a sweetheart,
A sweetheart once I had,
She was the fairest true beau-ty,
Her lips were red as red could be,
But her name was Davy Jones, O,
Her name was Davy Jones.
(repeat ad nauseam)

SALLY enters the cabin, followed by BERTHOLD and ALBRECHT who are supporting a weak and despondent BARON.

The BARON is still clutching the rose which he attempted to give to VENUS.

SALLY
(nervously)
Excuse me ... hello ... Excuse me ...
We've just been swallowed, and ... we
need some help ...

BARON
NO doctors ... no doctors.

ADOLPHUS
Do I hear the Baron?

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

GUSTAVUS
Eh?

ADOLPHUS
I think it's the Baron.

GUSTAVUS
(looking at the BARON)
I think it's the Baron.

ADOLPHUS
That's what I just said! Use your trumpet!

GUSTAVUS hits ADOLPHUS with his trumpet.

BARON
(moderately excited)
Adolphus! Gustavus! Is it really you?

They all embrace.

ADOLPHUS
So ... you're dead at last, eh?

GUSTAVUS
We were beginning to think you might be immortal.

SALLY
We're not dead.

BERTHOLD
Sally, this is Adolphus, who used to be able to hit a bull's-eye halfway round the world. And Gustavus who could blow down a forest with one breath.

ADOLPHUS
Those were the days, eh? When we were young and alive.

SALLY
(irritated)
You're not dead!
(to BARON)
But they're ever so old. Can they
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

SALLY (CONT.)
really help?
(to ADOLPHUS)
How do we get out of here?

ADOLPHUS
(puzzled)
Out?

GUSTAVUS
(who's been using his ear trumpet)
You can't get out ... You're dead.

ALBRECHT
How do you mean?

ADOLPHUS
It's no good fighting it.

SALLY
We're *not* dead!

GUSTAVUS
We all die y'know ... You have to accept it ... We're all dead here ... This is hell.

ADOLPHUS
Heaven.

GUSTAVUS
Purgatory.

ADOLPHUS
One of those places anyway.

SALLY
Don't be stupid.

ADOLPHUS
(indicating empty chairs)
Sit down ... relax ... have a game ... You're dead for a long time.

The BARON sits down at the table. BERTHOLD and ALBRECHT look at one another, shrug, and then follow the BARON's example. SALLY watches this with dismay.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

SALLY
What are you doing?

The BARON ignores SALLY. He is dealt a hand of cards by the hooded skeletal figure of DEATH who is sitting beside him but partially hidden by a broken beam.

SALLY
(angry)
You're giving up, aren't you?!

The BARON continues to ignore her.

SALLY
You can't give up! I won't let you!

BARON
(tetchily)
Go away! Clear off!

We see that DEATH has dealt the BARON a sinister hand. The queen, jack, and ace of spades.

SALLY
What about Rose and Daisy and my father and all the others?! You promised to help them!

BARON
They're all perfectly safe!

75 EXT. SQUARE

A quick scene of the town square where the gates look as though they are about to give way under the battering the TURKS are giving them. Smoke and flames are everywhere and things look very bad.

76 INT. GIANT FISH—INSIDE SHIP

BARON
They can look after themselves. Besides ... there are more important things.

SALLY
(furious)
Such as?

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

BARON
(sniffing the limp rose)
Well ...

The BARON indicates to DEATH that he wants another card. DEATH deals him a joker. At this point SALLY recognizes DEATH, screams, and knocks all the cards out of his hands.

BARON
(shouting angrily)
You horrible little brat! Can't you let me die in peace once in a while!!!

From somewhere below decks, in the bowels of the ship, we hear a strange whinnying-like sound. This is followed by the noise of wild running feet which seem to travel back and forth within the ship, all the time getting close to the cabin. The GANG look at each other in growing terror. The BARON puts SALLY down and pushes her over to the GANG for protection. He draws his saber and faces the door of the cabin in preparation to do battle with the THING when it arrives. The moment comes when the running feet seem to be approaching the door of the cabin. The BARON and CO. brace themselves for a terrifying encounter. Our focus is on the door. Suddenly, the interior (of the ship) wall of the cabin is being beaten in by some tremendous force. Repeated blows are struck at it until the wood begins to splinter and break. The BARON and CO. retreat to the opposite side of the cabin and take cover as best they can behind bits of furniture. The blows to the wall of the cabin continue until a section of it disintegrates leaving a large hole through which steps an elderly, mangy-looking horse.

BARON
(overjoyed)
Bucephalus! He must have heard me shouting!

The BARON embraces BUCEPHALUS.

BARON
Bucephalus! My Bucephalus!

BUCEPHALUS nuzzles the BARON. The GANG is relieved and amazed. SALLY pats BUCEPHALUS.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

BARON
This is a good omen, what?

BERTHOLD
(doubtful)
Oh, yeah. Yeah.

BARON
(indicating door)
Prepare a rowing boat and be ready to leave.

The GANG exchange puzzled looks. The BARON steps to the cabin window and opens it. He takes a large container of snuff from inside his jacket.

BARON
I have learned from experience that a modicum of snuff can be most efficacious.

The BARON opens the snuff-box and throws the contents out of the window. He places one hand over his own nose and one hand over BUCEPHALUS' nose.

77 EXT. GIANT FISH

ANGLE ON the exterior of the GIANT FISH, as it begins to vibrate and thrash about. Its eyes rotate.

78 INT. GIANT FISH—INSIDE SHIP

ANGLE ON the interior of the cabin which is vibrating and shaking. The GANG staggers towards the cabin door and begins to exit.

79 INT. GIANT FISH

ANGLE ON the interior of the fish as the stacks of rotting ships begin to shake and crumble.

80 EXT. GIANT FISH

ANGLE on the exterior of the GIANT FISH as it expels a fountain of water and debris through its blowhole. Amongst the debris is the rowing boat containing SALLY and CO.

81 EXT. SEASCAPE DAY

ANGLE ON a mist-covered seascape as SALLY and CO. haul themselves back into their boat and bail it out.

BERTHOLD
(inhaling deeply)
Fresh air! Ill never eat fish again ... if they promise not to eat me.

SALLY
Where's the Baron?

They look around for the BARON.

SALLY
Baron!

Silence.

SALLY
Baron!

SALLY looks at ALBRECHT and BERTHOLD, who avert their eyes. SALLY begins to cry. The others try to comfort her. At this moment a hand appears out of the water some distance form the boat. SALLY and CO. stare at it with bated breath. The hand reaches back into the water. It then re-emerges, lifting up the BARON by his pigtail. (It is in fact the BARON's own hand.) The BARON pulls himself and BUCEPHALUS, (restored to his prime) on whom he is still sitting, clear out of the water. SALLY and CO. look on, pleased but dumbfounded.

BARON
Well, come one, I can't keep this up for ever!

82 EXT. SEASCAPE DAY

ANGLE ON the rowing boat now containing the BARON, BUCEPHALUS, SALLY and CO. It moves through the mist, passing between the masts of sunken vessels. As the mist clears, the BARON and CO. see that they are back within sight of the town and TURKISH CAMP. The flag is still flying above the city walls.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

SALLY
(amazed)
Look! The town! We're here!

BARON
(rather smug)
Yes. And the flag's still flying. I told you there was nothing to worry about.

There is a series of distant explosions and within moments, cannon balls begin to land in the water all around them.

83 EXT. TURKISH CANNON DAY

ANGLE ON the Turkish camp where TURKISH SOLDIERS are re-positioning their cannons and firing them at the BARON and CO.

84 EXT. ROWING BOAT AT SEA DAY

Cannonballs are still raining down around the boat.

BERTHOLD
Oh my gawd! The Sultan's army! Quick! Back in the fish!

BARON
(coolly)
They are inviting us to defeat them. We must oblige.
(he draws his saber)
On a count of three: Gustavus — blow them back to Asia Minor. Adolphus — find the Sultan and shoot him! Albrecht — pull for the shore! Berthold — make yourself useful! One, two, three!

The GANG look at each other in impotent astonishment.

BERTHOLD
You couldn't make it "four," could you?

A cannonball tears through the boat which instantly begins to sink.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

SALLY
We're going down.

BARON
Abandon ship!

BERTHOLD
I think the ship's abandoning us, mate.

The boat sinks, depositing everyone in the water.

BERTHOLD
(frantic)
I still can't swim!

85 EXT. A ROCKY BEACH CLOSE TO THE TOWN DAY

ANGLE ON the BARON and CO. as they struggle out of the sea onto the rocky beach some distance from the town. All around them are the sunken and washed up ships of the town fleet. Beyond these wrecks, out at sea, are the Turkish ships which are still firing at them.

BARON
(spitting sea water)
This is absolutely dreadful ...

SALLY
It's hopeless.

BARON
(lying on his back to empty the water from his boots)
I've never before been in such a disastrous rout! ... I'm usually on the winning side!

ALBRECHT
If you weren't so competitive you wouldn't get so upset.

BERTHOLD
Albrecht's useless!
(to SALLY)
I've been trying to tell him about my legs.

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

ADOLPHUS
(dragging himself up the beach)
Well, there's nothing wrong with us, is there, Gustavus?!

GUSTAVUS
(removing a crab from his ear trumpet)
Eh?

SALLY
We might as well give up.

BARON
(surprised)
You mustn't say that. Not *you*.

86 EXT. SAND DUNES DAY

BERTHOLD, ALBRECHT, GUSTAVUS and ADOLPHUS are lying exhausted on the ground as the BARON, watched by SALLY and BUCEPHALUS, draws a plan of action in the sand with his saber.

BARON
Now, is we begin attacking from two directions simultaneously, we compound surprise with confusion. Albrecht and Gustavus will provide the major themes, as it were, to the battle, while Adolphus and Berthold ...

SALLY
Baron.

BARON
Don't interrupt ... What is it?

SALLY
This isn't going to work.

BARON
(irritated)
What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

SALLY
(indicating the others who are flat out)
They're all old and tired ... It's not like it used to be ... Don't you see?

The BARON looks at the others.

BERTHOLD, ALBRECHT and ADOLPHUS raise their heads slightly and look blankly at the BARON. For a moment the BARON seems taken aback. He then drops his saber in the sand and sets off out of the dune.

SALLY
Where are you going?

BARON
To give myself up.

SALLY
What?

The BARON stops at the top of the dune and turns.

BARON
I gave my word that I'd raise the siege and save the town. And I gathered you all together for that purpose ...

The BARON looks around at the group. They all look sheepish and uncomfortable under his gaze.

BARON
If you wish to see Baron Munchausen again ... You'll have to do something about it.

The BARON turns and continues on his way. SALLY chases him and catches up with him.

SALLY
You can't give yourself up! They might kill you! ...
(pause)
And then we'll have spent all that time in that smelly fish for nothing!

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

The BARON leaves SALLY and marches on towards the Turkish camp.

87 EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY

ANGLE ON the BARON striding confidently between the Turkish tents. He salutes astonished TURKISH SOLDIERS and doffs his hat to their female CAMP FOLLOWERS.

88 EXT. TURKISH CAMP THE SULTAN'S TENT DAY

ANGLE ON the BARON as he approaches an impressive tent. This is much larger than the other tents, covered with colorful designs and pennants, and surrounded by GUARDS. The BARON walks confidently past the GUARDS, who are too amazed to challenge him, lifts the flap of the tent, and enters.

89 INT. INSIDE THE SULTAN'S TENT DAY

The BARON steps into the SULTAN's tent. Here he finds the SULTAN and JACKSON sitting drinking wine and discussing business. The SULTAN's TIGER is lying on the flower-strewn rug. JACKSON is wearing a disguise. Neither of them notices the BARON.

JACKSON
(consulting papers)
So ... it's agreed ... on Friday the 28th, you surrender. That's three weeks tomorrow. We can fix the details later.

SULTAN
No, no, no. *You* surrender.

JACKSON
With respect, Sultan, we've been through all this. *You* surrender.

SULTAN
But we're winning.

JACKSON
We surrendered last time.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

SULTAN
So?

JACKSON
So now it's your turn.

SULTAN
I still don't get it.

JACKSON
Listen, if we surrender again, that's twice in succession. It all becomes terribly lopsided. Unbalanced. Whereas if you surrender, it's symmetrical.

SULTAN
What about the virgins?

JACKSON
Please. Forget the virgins. We're out of virgins. Let us instead concentrate on reaching a rational, sensible, and civilized agreement which will guarantee a world fit for science, progress, and —

BARON
But not Baron Munchausen.

The SULTAN and JACKSON spring to their feet.

SULTAN
Baron!

JACKSON
You! The old lunatic!

BARON
(stepping forward)
I'm afraid so.

SULTAN
Guards! Help! Murder!

Half a dozen GUARDS dive into the tent and grab the BARON.

SULTAN
Who let this man into my tent?

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

The GUARDS shake their heads and look worried.

BARON
(nonchalantly)
Sultan ... if you're still interested in my head ... it's yours ... I'm tired of it.

SULTAN
Send for the executioner!

One of the GUARDS exits.

BARON
So, Mr. Jackson, still the "rational" man, eh? How many people have perished in your logical little war?

JACKSON
There are certain rules, sir, to the proper conduct of living. We cannot fly to the moon. We cannot defy death. We must face the fact ... no, the folly of fantasists like you, who don't live in the *real* world ... and who consequently come to a very sticky end.

SULTAN
(offering a glass of wine to the BARON)
A last drink, Baron? Excellent Tokay.

90 **EXT. THE TURKISH CAMP EXECUTION SITE DAY**

ANGLE ON a prayer crier standing in the tower.

ANGLE ON the BARON standing on a raised platform outside the Sultan's tent. On the platform, beside the BARON, holding a scimitar, is the EXECUTIONER. The platform is surrounded by a large audience of Turkish SOLDIERS. In front of these, in the best seats, are the SULTAN and JACKSON (in disguise). Beside the platform, a DRUMMER is beating a slowly quickening rhythm.

SULTAN
(to the BARON)
Have you any famous last words?

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

BARON
(cooly)
Not yet.

SULTAN
(puzzled)
"Not yet"?
(to JACKSON)
Is that famous?

JACKSON
(shaking his head)
The man's a buffoon.

SULTAN
Executioner!

The EXECUTIONER steps forward.

SULTAN
Execute!

The BARON, obligingly, kneels down and cranes his neck forward. The dotted line is printed around his neck. The pace and volume of the drumming increases. The blind EXECUTIONER raises his scimitar. The ODALISQUES in their cages anxiously watch the scene. The EXECUTIONER is on the point of bringing it down to a crescendo of drumming, when "PING," something strikes the weapon, knocking it from his hand, sending it spinning directly at the SULTAN, slicing through his turban and barely missing his skull.

91 EXT. A DISTANT SAND DUNE DAY

ANGLE ON ADOLPHUS, as he lowers the BARON's still smoking musket from his shoulder and peers in the direction in which he has just shot. With him on the sand dune are SALLY and BERTHOLD.

SALLY
(leaping up and down excitedly)
You did it!

92 EXT. THE TURKISH CAMP EXECUTION SITE DAY

ANGLE ON THE BARON, at the execution site, as

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

BUCEPHALUS, the BARON's saber on his back, jumps over the AUDIENCE and gallops past the execution platform. The BARON vaults onto BUCEPHALUS, scattering the AUDIENCE in confusion.

CUT TO:

THE SULTAN as he shouts to his GENERALS who start to rise from their seats, but before they reach standing position the BARON charges down the line lopping their heads neatly off with his saber. The BARON glances back at them, and WE SEE a row of headless bodies fall over. The SULTAN stands frozen as the BARON charges towards him, saber swinging down. But rather than slicing through another neck the BARON slices the tent pole and the SULTAN and JACKSON are engulfed by the collapsing canopy of the pavilion and trapped with the TIGER. The BARON waves his sword toward his distant GANG.

BARON
I knew we could do it! All together now!

93 EXT. A DISTANT SAND DUNE DAY

ANGLE ON GUSTAVUS on another sand dune. He takes an enormously deep breath and exhales violently towards the Turkish camp. Throughout this battle sequence, BERTHOLD, ALBRECHT, ADOLPHUS and GUSTAVUS remain old men, and never quite return to their "Sultan's Tale" form. They succeed, by dint of making enormous efforts, in producing enough of their youthful talents and vigor to be extremely effective.

94 EXT. THE TURKISH CAMP DAY

ANGLE ON THE TURKISH CAMP as a violent wind (fluctuating in the pattern of GUSTAVUS' breathing) whips up clouds of dust and flattens tents. TURKISH SOLDIERS are panicking and running everywhere. The TURKISH CAVALRY struggle in the wind. An ELEPHANT is blown onto a rock and the tower on its back disintegrates. The other elephants are led back to their compound. A group of soldiers runs and a tent blows into them.

GUSTAVUS starts to pant. A TURKISH CAVALRYMAN sees the BARON fighting another MOUNTED TURK and mounts his

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

horse. He charges up towards the BARON, his lance at the ready. As the BARON knocks the MOUNTED TURK from his horse, he is just about to deal the BARON a fatal blow, when he is hit by something unseen and falls to the ground. The BARON turns to stare at him.

95 EXT. A DISTANT SAND DUNE DAY

ANGLE ON ADOLPHUS as he lowers his smoking musket to reload. Nearby GUSTAVUS begins hacking and wheezing, trying to get his breath. SALLY tries thumping him on the back. The wind stops for a moment. He finally responds to SALLY's thumping and with a mighty gasp, begins to inhale. Air, leaves and dust roar into his open mouth.

96 EXT. THE TURKISH CAMP DAY

Still unseen by the BARON, the CAVALRYMAN swings his sword downwards. But just before the blade slices through the BARON, BERTHOLD screeches in with a Turkish shield. CLANG! The blade strikes the shield. The CAVALRYMAN drops his sword as it rings and vibrates out of control. The noise makes the BARON turn and he runs the CAVALRYMAN through. The body crashes to the ground. The BARON looks down to see BERTHOLD for the first time — lying under the corpse — gasping for breath.

BARON
This is no time for napping, we're fighting a battle.

97 EXT. DISTANT SAND DUNE DAY

GUSTAVUS finally responds to SALLY's thumpings and, with a mighty gasp, begins to inhale. Air, leaves, dust roar into his open mouth.

98 EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY

Tents are being sucked from their guy ropes. SOLDIERS, equipment begin to slip and slide towards the distant GUSTAVUS and SALLY.

99 EXT. DISTANT SAND DUNE DAY

Despite their struggling, TURKISH SOLDIERS are being sucked up the sand dune towards GUSTAVUS' open maw. Then the moving air stops again. GUSTAVUS' lungs can hold no more. His mouth is stuffed with twigs and leaves. Once again he is gagging. SALLY is terrified. The TURKISH SOLDIERS have recovered from their slide, are getting to their feet, spears at the ready, and are almost upon GUSTAVUS and SALLY. She is banging madly on his back, trying to dislodge the blockage in his throat. Just as the spears reach them — GAAGH!! — GUSTAVUS exhales. The SOLDIERS are blown high in the air.

100 EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY

The SULTAN and JACKSON have managed to disentangle themselves form the collapsed pavilion. JACKSON pulls his cloak over his face and scuttles away. The SULTAN, half out from under the tent, starts to shout orders when he looks up. Hurtling down from the sky are several spear-carrying SOLDIERS. The SULTAN dives under the canvas just as the spears thud around him, SOLDIERS crashing everywhere.

CUT TO:

THE BARON, who spots JACKSON escaping. He turns to Pursue him but his path is blocked by a platoon of TURKISH PIKEMEN. As he deals with them a SNIPER on top of an elephant-back tower takes aim.

101 EXT. DISTANT SAND DUNE DAY

ANGLE ON ADOLPHUS and BERTHOLD on the dune. ADOLPHUS pulls the trigger of his musket. The musket, however, fails to fire. Frantically he shouts to BERTHOLD, indicating the SNIPER.

102 EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY

BERTHOLD races off in a cloud of dust. As he runs, he trips on a lump of rock and crashes down the side of some rocks, landing with a WALLOP. Hurriedly, he gets up and whooshes off towards the camp. WE SEE the BARON fighting through the line of PIKEMEN as BERTHOLD races past in the distance towards the tower. But before he

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

reaches it, the SNIPER fires. BERTHOLD screeches to a halt. The bullet whistles past with BERTHOLD in pursuit. He catches it up, grabs it, but OW!!—it's red hot and he lets it go. The bullet continues on its way. BERTHOLD accelerates past it.

NEW ANGLE ON BERTHOLD whooshing into SHOT, grabbing a discarded piece of elbow armor and raising it just in time to deflect the bullet from the BARON's back. The bullet strikes the tip of a spear about to impale the BARON, shattering it, then ricochets off and hits another spear intent on the same evil deed. CRACK! ZING! The spear is deflected the the bullet shoots off in another direction — towards BERTHOLD, who ducks just in time — flies back across the camp and ... hits the SNIPER square in the chest. As he falls form the tower, his foot catches in the rope attached to the camp's flag, and it shoots to the top of the flagpole.

BERTHOLD collapses. The BARON looks around and sees only BERTHOLD, slumped on the ground.

BARON
Dammit, man, make yourself useful. I can't do everything.

103 **EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY**

A line of TURKISH CAVALRYMEN charge towards CAMERA in a row. The BARON turns and sees them and dashes off towards the SULTAN's tent. The CAVALRYMEN race after him. He races around the tent catching up with the end of the line of TURKISH CAVALRYMEN. He turns in on them, racing through shot in the same direction. The TURKS immediately follow behind him, forming a second parallel line of CAVALRYMEN. Almost as soon as the BARON leaves frame, he appears again from the other side of frame but closer to camera, and races through shot pursued by TURKISH CAVALRYMEN. Now there are three parallel lines of RACING HORSEMEN. Again, the moment after he leaves frame, the BARON appears from the opposite side pursued by TURKS. Now there are four lines. And once more he leaves frame only to appear again closer to camera with the TURKS in pursuit. We CUT TO a wide shot to reveal that the BARON has managed to get the TURKS racing around in an ever-decreasing spiral. Cutting to the center of the spiral, BUCEPHALUS with the BARON on his back, is standing on his hind legs spinning like a top.

104 EXT. DISTANT SAND DUNE DAY

GUSTAVUS has recovered.

SALLY
Now ... easy breaths, this time.

105 EXT. TOP OF ROCK DAY

ADOLPHUS fires his musket.

106 EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY

ANGLE ON the Turkish Camp as the bullet hits a soldier who falls forwards onto his gun, causing it to fire. The bullet of his gun hits a powder keg sitting next to a pile of cannonballs, which are blown up into the air.

107 EXT. DISTANT SAND DUNE/TOP OF ROCK DAY

ANGLE ON SALLY AND GUSTAVUS on their sand dune as cannonballs explode around them

ANGLE ON ADOLPHUS, also ducking from the explosions.

108 EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY

ANGLE ON the Turkish cannons continuing to fire on the gang.

109 EXT. DISTANT SAND DUNE DAY

TO SALLY AND GUSTAVUS

SALLY
Where's Albrecht?

110 EXT. PART OF HARBOR DAY

From the water lapping the rocks, ringing the harbor, ALBRECHT appears. Over his shoulders are the anchors of some sunken ships. The chains drag behind.

111 EXT. PART OF HARBOR DAY

ALBRECHT is pulling the anchor chains, swinging the ships.

112 EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY

The Turkish camp is being blown to pieces by their own cannons. A cannonball hits the powder store near the land-based cannon, setting off a chain of devastating explosion. The cannons are destroyed.

All of these explosions are making the elephants in their compound very twitchy.

113 EXT. DISTANT SAND DUNE DAY

SALLY is holding a mouse by the tail.

SALLY
(to GUSTAVUS)
Gently, this time.

GUSTAVUS blows, the mouse flies off.

114 EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY

The mouse, now rolled up like a ball, bounces across the ground until it comes to rest amongst the elephants' feet. It unrolls itself and starts to run around. PANIC! The elephants go crazy. They stampede. The towers on their backs crash to the ground as they thunder off. The TURKISH TROOPS also panic as they see the elephants charging towards them. A mass stampede is underway.

CUT TO:

THE SULTAN'S PAVILION. The SULTAN is just managing to cut his way through the pinned-down pile of canvas and escape, when the elephant stampede reaches him. Somehow the pounding feet miss him as he cowers under the canvas, but a trailing harness snags on the tent ropes and the pile of material, including the SULTAN, is swept up in the great ball and dragged, bouncing and banging, behind the elephants as they charge pell-mell into the audience.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

CUT TO:

THE BARON, who is dealing with a few of the most desperate and hardened JANISSERIES, when a strange, ominous, whooshing noise is heard. The JANISSERIES look up.

CUT TO:

A GROUP OF RETREATING CAVALRYMEN who also look up towards the source of the noise. The retreating FOOTSOLDIERS increase their speed as they, too, take in the cause of the noise.

115 EXT. TURKISH CAMP — SKY DAY

ANGLE ON the sky where first one, then two, then three sunken ships fly into view — being swung in a giant arc.

116 EXT. PART OF HARBOR DAY

ANGLE ON ALBRECHT on a rock in the harbor — the anchor chains held tight in his hands as he spins round and round like a hammer thrower.

117 EXT. TURKISH CAMP/PART OF HARBOR DAY

Round and round swing the sunken ships. The TURKS are running for their lives.

ALBRECHT strains with the effort and then, with a mighty heave, he lets the chains go.

The ships hurtle through the air, flying high over the BARON as he watches them pass.

ALBRECHT falls backwards into the water.

118 EXT. TURKISH CAMP DAY

ANGLE ON TURKISH TROOPS racing away as the ships loom overhead. And then, with an earth-shaking crash, the ships smash into the ground, scattering the remains of the TURKISH ARMY.

119 EXT. PLAIN OUTSIDE THE TOWN DAY

ANGLE ON the TURKISH ARMY as it retreats into the distance in a cloud of dust.

120 EXT. BATTLEMENTS OF RELIEVED TOWN — BARON'S P.O.V.

Of the TOWNSPEOPLE and SOLDIERS on the battlements. The CAMERA PANS along the cheering, waving CROWD until it reaches one particular gap in the crenelations where it stops on the face of a very unhappy-looking HORATIO JACKSON.

121 EXT. IN WRECKAGE OF TURKISH CAMP DAY

The BARON, BUCEPHALUS, SALLY, ALBRECHT, BERTHOLD, GUSTAVUS and ADOLPHUS, tired but triumphant, meet in the wreckage of the TURKISH camp. The BARON's sword arm thrashes around automatically from time to time. They look towards the retreating Turks.

BERTHOLD
(dawning realization)
We did it! We DID IT!!!

BERTHOLD, SALLY, ALBRECHT, GUSTAVUS, ADOLPHUS and BUCEPHALUS dance around, hugging each other. The BARON looks on approvingly.

GUSTAVUS
We've won!!!

ADOLPHUS
We beat them! We've done it!

ALBRECHT
YAHOO!!!

SALLY
YIPPEE! They've gone!

ADOLPHUS
Good riddance!
(shouting in the wrong direction)
And don't come back!!!

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

SALLY
(to the BARON)
We've won!

BARON
Of course.

BERTHOLD
WE DID IT!
(another kind of dawning realization)
We did it?

GUSTAVUS and CO. stop cheering and dancing, and join BERTHOLD in sober reflection.

GUSTAVUS
(doubtfully)
We've won?

ADOLPHUS
How the hell did we manage that?

ALBRECHT
(sinking, exhausted, to the ground)
With considerable reluctance.

BERTHOLD and CO. collapse, joining ALBRECHT moaning on the ground.

122 EXT. INSIDE THE GATES OF THE RELIEVED TOWN DAY

Cymbals crash, trumpets blare as the band strikes up and the triumphal procession begins. The BARON, with SALLY sitting in front of him on BUCEPHALUS, leads the victorious GANG through the crowd-lined streets. From her vantage place SALLY can see a banner raised above the CROWE, on which is written (clearly hurriedly), "HENRY SALT AND DAUGHTER PLAYERS." SALLY looks beneath the banner where she sees SALT surrounded by the THEATER PEOPLE. SALT smiles and waves at her. SALLY smiles and waves back. (Obviously Sally's relationship with her Dad has taken a turn for the better.) The BARON and CO. continue on through the CROWD into the town square where a giant bronze head of the BARON is being reinstated on the damaged equestrian statue which dominates the square.

123 EXT. TOWN SQUARE DAY

A TOP SHOT of the procession. A large stone wing is revealed as the CAMERA moves. It hovers menacingly over the square. A hand steadies itself on the wing.

124 EXT. CATHEDRAL DOME DAY

ANGLE ON a great stone gargoyle of death — wings spread, scythe in one hand — jutting from the cornice of the shattered dome of the cathedral. Leaning on its back is JACKSON, carrying a musket. Clearly preparing to use it, he takes aim.

125 EXT. HIGH ABOVE THE TOWN SQUARE — JACKSON'S P.O.V.

As he lines up the sights of the musket on the BARON. It is clear from this that SALLY is in danger too.

126 EXT. TOWN SQUARE DAY

ANGLE ON the BARON and CO. happily surrounded by euphoric TOWNSPEOPLE. ROSE, DAISY and VIOLET plus BABY, unable to reach him through the throng. He laughs, doffs his hat and blows kisses to the ACTRESSES. ARGUS leaps out from the crowds, welcoming him.

127 EXT. CATHEDRAL DOME DAY

ANGLE ON HORATIO JACKSON as he pulls the trigger and fires his musket.

128 EXT. TOWN SQUARE DAY

ANGLE ON the BARON as he is struck by JACKSON's bullet. He jerks back, and topples from BUCEPHALUS. SALLY is unaware of what has happened behind her.

For a second there is a terrible silence, before the TOWNSPEOPLE, suspecting a sniper, become hysterical and stampede all over the place, trampling on each other as they go. BERTHOLD, ALBRECHT, ADOLPHUS and GUSTAVUS run forward to tend to the BARON. SALLY remains, stunned, on the back of BUCEPHALUS.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED

BERTHOLD
He's dying!

129 **EXT. CATHEDRAL DOME DAY**

ANGLE ON the stone gargoyle as it moves. Cracking and tearing, it transforms itself into the living figure of DEATH, and ripping itself loose form the Cathedral, flies off leaving JACKSON momentarily exposed. Recovering from his shock at the moving gargoyle, he ducks down out of sight as someone shouts from below.

FROM BELOW (V.O.)
There he is!

130 **EXT. TOWN SQUARE DAY**

SOLDIERS begin firing up at the Cathedral roof. The GROUP around the BARON are in a desperate state.

DAISY
Fetch a doctor! Hurry!

VIOLET
Don't leave me, Baron, please don't leave me!

ROSE
Get back! Give him air!

DAISY
(to SALT, concerned for SALLY)
Mind Sally.

A BLACK FIGURE makes his way out of the panicking crowd towards the BARON.

PERSON IN CROWD
Here's the doctor!

BARON
(barely alive)
No ... no doctor.

The DOCTOR leans over the BARON. SALLY is being pulled away and comforted by SALT. Suddenly ARGUS growls. SALLY turns back. The black-robed DOCTOR has changed

(CONTINUED)

into the black-winged figure of DEATH. The others don't seem to notice. SALLY breaks away form SALT and begins attacking DEATH.

SALLY
NO! ... NO! ... GET AWAY! ... NO! ... LEAVE HIM ALONE! ... STOP! ... GO AWAY! ... STOP! ...
(etc.)

DEATH seems totally impervious to this attack. The shaken SALT steps forward and tries to calm SALLY but she fights him off.

SALT
Sally! What is it?!
(to ROSE, VIOLET and DAISY)
Quick! ... Help me! ... She's having a fit!

SALT, ROSE, VIOLET plus BABY and DAISY drag the screaming, kicking, foaming at the mouth SALLY away from the fallen BARON and the hooded figure of DEATH, who has just managed to extract a glowing, fluttering "thing" from out of the BARON's mouth.

ROSE
He's dead.

DEATH then turns and moves quickly away.

ARGUS follows him, snapping at his heels, and causes him to trip. DEATH falls to the ground, and in so doing, lets go of the fluttering and glowing thing which he extracted from the BARON's mouth. This "thing" flutters away and flies up above the town and seems to dissolve into the sun.

131 EXT. TOWN SQUARE DAY

The great equestrian statue of the BARON and BUCEPHALUS is draped in black crepe. At the base of the statue a solemn procession is in progress. The grief-stricken TOWNSPEOPLE line the street as the BARON's funeral cortege makes its way towards a grave that has been dug beneath the statue. SALLY is inconsolable, the THEATER PEOPLE are in shock. The GANG are old and defeated once again. As the PRIEST

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

conducts the burial service, the glass-topped coffin with the BARON's body is slowly lowered into the grave. As the shadow of the grave passes over the BARON's young, sublime face, we hear a VOICE OVER:

BARON (V.O.)
... and that was only one of the several occasions on which I met my death ... an interesting experience which I don't hesitate strongly to recommend. And so, with the help of my inestimable servants, I defeated the Turks and saved the day. And from that time forth, everyone with a talent for it lived happily ever after.

132 **INT. THEATER STAGE DAY**

ANGLE ON BARON's face now old and withered as we first saw him. He is standing on the stage of the theater. The AUDIENCE is still there.

Behind him is the "underwear" balloon with its galleon, suspended by wires from the top of the proscenium arch. The bombardment has stopped but all around are damaged buildings and injured people.

SALT, deeply moved, begins to applaud the BARON. He is suddenly interrupted by the voice of HORATIO JACKSON.

JACKSON (V.O.)
Stop this nonsense at once!

133 **INT. THEATER STAGE DAY**

ANGLE ON HORATIO JACKSON arriving with ENTOURAGE and SOLDIERS. The small manic DRUMMER BOY is still with him.

JACKSON
You, sir, are under arrest for spreading ridiculous tales at a time of great danger ... when the enemy is at the gates! Arrest him!

The group of SOLDIERS standing close to JACKSON look uneasy, but don't move.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

JACKSON
I order you to arrest that man!

The SOLDIERS move a couple of inches and stop.

134 INT. FRONT OF THEATER (TOWN SQUARE) DAY

A wide shot of the front of the theater as JACKSON begins to lose his cool.

JACKSON
Am I or am I not the elected representative?! Arrest him!

Nobody moves except the BARON, who jumps calmly down from the stage and, followed by ARGUS, walks through the AUDIENCE towards the hole in the wall.

BARON
(shouting out across the square)
Open the gates!

135 EXT. FRONT OF THE THEATER DAY

ANGLE ON JACKSON and CO. on the forestage of the theater.

JACKSON
Do *not* open the gates! The Turks are outside, and we are not about to surrender!

136 EXT. TOWN SQUARE DAY

ANGLE ON the BARON and ARGUS as they leave the theater and stride across the square in the direction of the gates.

BARON
Open the gates! Open the gates!

SALT, stirred by the BARON's example, turns to his COMPANY.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

SALT
(heroically)
Come on!

SALT, with RUPERT, BILL, JEREMY, and DESMOND, ROSE, DAISY, VIOLET and whoever plays the SULTAN, follow the BARON out of the theater and across the square. The rest of the AUDIENCE exhange looks and then follow SALT and the THEATER COMPANY. JACKSON is frantic. He can't believe what's happening. He chases after the AUDIENCE.

JACKSON
Come back! I'm warning you! Anybody who opens those gates will be guilty of treason! ... Arrest that man! ... Now! ... This instant! ... Anyone who fails to arrest him is under arrest! ... And anyone who doesn't arrest them is under arrest! ... We will not tolerate a breakdown of law and order at this crucial moment in our history! ...

JACKSON runs at the back of the CROWD, but nobody takes any notice of him, except for a group of thin, cheeky KIDS who begin to gather around him. JACKSON, thinking that he can head off the CROWD, dives into a side street. The KIDS follow.

137 EXT. NEAR THE GATE DAY

As the BARON and ARGUS with SALT, the THEATER COMPANY and the AUDIENCE from the theater, approach the barricaded gates, JACKSON with a COMPANY OF SOLDIERS run out of a side street and place themselves between the gates and the BARON.

JACKSON
(triumphant)
The gates will remain closed.

EVERYONE looks to the BARON. However, the BARON has been exhausted by telling his story and marching to the gates.

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED:

BARON
(trying to shout but only managing to whisper)
Open the gates!

SALLY looks with concern at the flagging BARON. She catches SALT's eye.

SALT
(removing wig)
Open the gates!

JACKSON
(to the SOLDIERS)
Shoot anyone who disobeys my orders.

SALT
(moving forward)
Open the gates, dear friends, and seize the day. Or close our minds up with invention's death. In fear there's nothing so destroys a man as ignorant dullness and conformity. So when the blast of hopelessness blows in our ears, then imitate the actions of the poet. Flex the mind's eye, conjure up the brain, disguise brutality with sympathetic urge.

SALT and the COMPANY have begun to press through the tents of the amazed SOLDIERS. Some of thse hit out half-heartedly at the THEATER COMPANY but are easily overwhelmed.

JACKSON
(apoplectic)
Shoot them! Stop them!

SALT
On, on you noblest actors whose spirit springs divine from ancient temples. Grasp the mantle of the imagination, leap the void, and perform the kind of deed which might one day save the world! Open the gates!

SALT and the THEATER COMPANY, plus the BARON, SALLY, SOLDIERS and THEATER AUDIENCE remove the last bits of barricade around the gate.

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED:

JACKSON
Stop! Have I not made myself clear?!!! I'll give you one more chance! Shoot these people at once! ... So it's treason then? ... Treason!

JACKSON has clearly gone doolally. The KIDS reappear and laugh and dance around him. He strikes at them but they dodge easily out of the way.

JACKSON
You're under arrest! All of you! I want to see you all outside my office at four o'clock, when the bell tolls!!!

At this point, the gates are opened and JACKSON is drowned out by the cheering of the THEATER COMPANY and AUDIENCE. SALT and the THEATER COMPANY lift the BARON and SALLY shoulder high and carry them out through the gates.

138 THE GATES DAY

The massive gates are swung open and the BARON is carried through them followed by the THEATER COMPANY and TOWNSPEOPLE. They look around and see bits of abandoned Turkish siege equipment, battering rams, guns, ammunition, broken tents, etc. Evidence that the Turks have indeed been here, but no sign of the Turks themselves. The TOWNSPEOPLE begin to shout and cheer.

TOWNSPEOPLE
It's true! They've gone! The Turks have gone! He's beaten them! He's chased off the Turks! Three cheers for the Baron!
(etc.)

As they cheer, a speck of dust appears in the distance. It gets closer and closer until we see that it's BUCEPHALUS, in his prime. He gallops up to the BARON. The BARON mounts him. As he looks down at the cheering TOWNSPEOPLE the BARON sees SALLY and the THEATER PEOPLE push their way to the front of the crowd. He takes the faded, water-logged rose meant for Venus from inside his jacket, looks at ROSE with a wistful expression, hesitates and, instead, turns and gives it to SALLY.

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED:

SALLY
(to the BARON)
It wasn't just a story, was it?

BARON
(with a twinkle in
his eye, doffs his
hat to SALLY)

The cheering CROWD now parts to let the BARON through as he turns BUCEPHALUS and rides away towards the open plain with ARGUS trotting by his side. He stops once and turns to wave back at the PEOPLE at the gate. SALT is standing with his arm around SALLY. And we, the cinema audience, watch as the MUSIC swells and the BARON rides off into the sunset.

The following sequences do not appear in the final shooting script or the finished film. They were excised from early drafts of the screenplay due to budgeting and scheduling considerations.

This scene was to have opened the film, preceeding the credits:

The screen is filled with an 18th Century mechanical model of the solar system. The clockwork mechanism smoothly ticks the planetary orbs through their circular dance to the strains of an elegant minuet. The revolving planets are INTERCUT with tight shots of swirling, dignified 18th Century FIGURES dancing the minuet in a mirrored ballroom. Over this appears the following:

Eighteenth Century Europe

The Age of Reason

Mankind enters a new era of scientific

progress, enlightenment and order.

As the DANCERS and planets spin, the orrery continues to swing the earth slowly towards CAMERA where ... it explodes. As the smoke clears we see we are looking into the mouth of an ornate Turkish cannon.

CUT TO:

A RUBBLE-FILLED STREET where the missile from the Turkish cannon lands and explodes, blowing up a passing CITIZEN and sending other CITIZENS running for cover amidst a shower of burning debris.

CUT TO:

THE TURKISH CANNON as they continue to fire. Exotic flags flutter above them.

TITLE

THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

BEGIN CREDITS

The following sequence was replaced by scenes 13-15 in the final shooting script:

INT. THE SULTAN'S HAREM DAY

ANGLE ON the SULTAN's harem as the BARON and SULTAN withdraw from the window. The SULTAN, dramatically, sets up an hourglass. The BARON produces his own mini-hourglass from his waistcoat pocket, and sets it going simultaneously with the SULTAN's. He then returns it to his pocket. The BARON and SULTAN then drink a toast.

EXT. THE SULTAN'S GIANT CHESS BOARD DAY

ANGLE ON the SULTAN's giant chess board where he and the BARON, seated under canopies, are playing giant chess in which the pieces are living beings. The pawns are FOOT SOLDIERS with spears, the knight — MOUNTED CAVALRY, the rooks — heavy cannon manned by LIVERIED GUNNERS in castellated howdahs on the backs of elephants. This being the beginning of the game, there is a complete set of "pieces" in place. Lying in front of the SULTAN is his TIGER.

SULTAN
(to a servant)
My rook to take the Baron's queen's knight.

The SERVANT shouts the SULTAN's instructions through a megaphone whereupon the GUNNER on one of the SULTAN's "rooks" fires his cannon at one of the BARON's mounted SOLDIERS. As the smoke clears only a large crater is left. The BARON looks disgusted.

SULTAN
(to BARON)
Check.

The Baron looks at the SULTAN and then at the hourglass which is now half empty.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE SULTAN'S GIANT CHESS BOARD DAY

The giant chess board nearly half an hour later. There are now only a few of the BARON's pieces left on the board. He has been playing a non-lethal game as best he can.

(CONTINUED)

BARON
(to the servant)
Bishop to Queen's rook 6.

The SERVANT shouts the BARON's instructions and a terrified "pawn" shuffles forward onto the next square.

BARON
Checkmate.

The SULTAN smiles acknowledgement to the BARON and then glances down at the now nearly empty hourglass. The BARON looks around at the SULTAN'S EXECUTIONER, a fat sweaty man with a large shiny scimitar. The EXECUTIONER, with the help of an ASSISTANT, begins measuring the preparing the BARON's neck by drawing a dotted line around it. The BARON checks his personal hourglass, and glances at BERTHOLD's weights.

BARON
Er, excuse me ... Back in five minutes.

The BARON gets up and walks out of the SULTAN's sight with cool dignity.

However, once around the corner, he breaks into a desperate run down an arched corridor towards a distant opening.

EXT. SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

The BARON hurtles out of an opening in the wall and leaps high into the air over the balustrading.

CUT TO:

A WIDE SHOT to reveal the opening to be a couple of hundred feet above the ground. As the BARON falls he shouts:

BARON
Bucephalus!

EXT. A FOUNTAIN SQUARE IN THE GROUNDS OF THE SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

BUCEPHALUS, the BARON's white stallion, looks up from the fountain he is drinking from.

EXT. SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

The BARON plummets down, down, down.

EXT. CONSTANTINOPLE STREET DAY

BUCEPHALUS thunders down the street as PASSERS-BY leap out of the way.

EXT. SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

The BARON continues to fall ... through a line of laundry ... acquiring another pair of trousers over the original pair.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET IN CONSTANTINOPLE DAY

BUCEPHALUS pounds past.

EXT. SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

And still, the BARON falls — crashing through more laundry lines — acquiring more odd bits of clothing.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET DAY

BUCEPHALUS races along ... is he beginning to look worried?

EXT. SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

The BARON is looking ever so slightly worried as he continues his rushing descent. His P.O.V. shows the ground getting terribly close.

EXT. BASE OF SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

The BARON hurtles toward the ground with no hope of averting disaster when ... past CAMERA gallops BUCEPHALUS — just in time for the BARON to land squarely in the saddle — and roar off through an archway.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET DAY

The BARON and BUCEPHALUS charge around a corner — up to CAMERA and then take off over us with a mighty leap.

EXT. RICHLY DECORATED WINDOW

BUCEPHALUS (with BARON) leaps through window.

INT. SULTAN'S HAREM DAY

BUCEPHALUS and BARON crash through window and gallop through harem, across pool, past colonnade and out window.

EXT. A SQUARE IN GROUNDS OF SULTAN'S PALACE DAY

The BARON'S SERVANTS look up from their card game as they hear the crash of window. CUT TO their P.O.V. as they see BUCEPHALUS and BARON come hurtling out of a window some 40-50 feet above them. With a shrug as if this is merely typical behavior on the part of the BARON, they turn back to their game as the BARON and BUCEPHALUS thunder down to the ground.

BARON
(breathless)
Where the hell's Berthold?!

This sequence was replaced by scenes 45-51 in the final shooting script:

EXT. A HARBOR ON THE MOON DAY

The BARON and SALLY sail past a gigantic wall from where a bridge extends to a gigantic lighthouse. They round a corner and see a vast baroque floating city into which they continue along a canal of sand. This brings them to a giant quay.

EXT. QUAYSIDE MOON DAY

The BARON and SALLY are mooring the galleon to the quay, alongside the giant moon-ships. They tie their thin earth rope around a massive capstan, adding it to the thick moon ropes already there.

BARON
I've always been one of the king's favorites ... We'll receive a right royal welcome.

Suddenly, the BARON and SALLY and the area immediately surrounding them are thrown into shadow. They turn around in search of the cause, and look upwards. Sally is astonished.

EXT. UPPER QUAYSIDE MOON DAY

There, something huge and flapping and emitting a terrible cacophonous shrieking is diving out of the sky towards them. It lands in a whirlwind of dust. Coughing and gagging SALLY and the BARON peer through the clearing dust. Three gigantic bird-like heads, their beaks snapping and shrieking, lunge towards them. SALLY grabs the BARON for protection. As the dust continues to clear we can see that the heads all attach to the same body. However, they seem unhappy with the situation — spending as much time attacking each other as they do snapping at SALLY and the BARON. Sitting on the three-headed GRIFFIN's back, trying to rein in the shrieking heads, is a giant SOLDIER, armed with an asparagus spear and a mushroom shield.

EXT. QUAYSIDE MOON DAY

ANGLE ON the BARON and SALLY where they stand, dwarfed, at the taloned feet of the huge GRIFFIN.

(CONTINUED)

BARON
(shouting up)
Good morning! I am Baron Munchausen. You may have heard of me ... I'm a very close friend of your king, and I'd be most grateful if you would inform him of my arrival.
(to SALLY)
Note the asparagus spear. Very effective if used skillfully.

EXT. QUAYSIDE MOON DAY

A wide shot of the scene on the quay as the SOLDIER lifts his asparagus spear and hurls it into the galleon which instantly sinks beneath the sand.

INT. IMPRESSIVE HALL MOON DAY

A magnificent Baroque Hall. Not a soul is in sight. Off CAMERA a door opens. Footsteps. A FOOTMAN carrying a tray with a glass cover walks into SHOT ... upside down on the ceiling! As he crosses the hall the CAMERA revolves – turning the room upside down but, the FOOTMAN the right way up. A tighter SHOT reveals a tiny BARON and SALLY sitting on the giant tray. SALLY looks apprehensive.

BARON
They look at things differently here.

The 50-foot-high FOOTMAN continues on through a massive door.

INT. THE ROYAL BANQUETING HALL MOON DAY

As they pass through the door, the floor seems to drop away. They find themselves on the brink of an enormous bowl-shaped space.

A banquet is in full swing in the giant KING's banqueting hall. Giant MUSIC is being played. Giant GUESTS sit around tables which are groaning with masses of giant food. Giant FOOTMEN and MAIDS come and go, pouring wine and waiting on table. Everybody is having a wonderful time, and everybody and everything is labelled with a description of what he, she, or it

is. On seeing the BARON and SALLY arrive, the KING, who is seated at the top of the center table, detaches his head form his body and sends it to greet them.

KING'S HEAD
(zooming through the hall)
Baron! ... Baron Munchausen!

The FOOTMAN lifts the lid from the tray.

BARON
(bowing)
Your Majesty.

KING'S HEAD
How marvelous to see you again!

BARON
(remembering)
You remembered.

KING'S HEAD
Nobody forgets the Baron ...

The BARON introduces SALLY to the KING'S HEAD.

BARON
Sally ... The King ... Well, his head at any rate.

SALLY
(curtseying)
How-do-you-do.

KING'S HEAD
Charmed I'm sure.
(to the footman's head)
Label our new guests immediately.

The FOOTMAN's head nods, disconnects from his body and hovers off. SALLY looks puzzled.

BARON
They forget everything whenever there's an eclipse.

KING'S HEAD
(straining to remember)
You know, there's something in particular about you, Baron, which I feel I ought to remember ... What on moon is it?
(shakes his head)
Never mind. Come and join us. You've arrived in time for the great monthly feast of the forgetting.

CUT TO:

A STAGE at the other end of the banqueting hall on which a group of giant MUSICIANS accompany four SINGERS who do a song and dance routine with a great deal of choreography for detachable heads.

THE FOUR HEADS
(singing)
It's nice to remember the nice things,
It's nice to remember what's nice,
It's nice to remember the nice things,
But it's even nicer to forget.

Too much remembering, too much
remembering brings you down,
To much remembering, too much
remembering makes you frown.

It's nice to remember ...
(etc.)

CUT TO:

THE BARON AND SALLY who are seated at the top table at the opposite end to the KING. They are sitting on chairs, stacked with books, which brings them up to the level of the other (giant) GUESTS. The BARON now has a label attached to him reading "Munchausen, Baron," and SALLY has a label tied to her reading "Salt, Sally." SALLY is eating like mad, tearing at items of giant food.

SALLY
(worried)
But what if we forget? ...

BARON
We won't forget. We'll leave before the eclipse.

SALLY
(not satisfied)
Why didn't you say anything about this forgetting business before?

BARON
I forgot.

SALLY
(putting foot down)
We can't stay here! There isn't time!

BARON
(soothingly)
The city's perfectly all right. The present assault is over. Everyone there is quite safe.

SALLY
How do you know?

BARON
I just know.

CUT TO:

A VERY QUICK SCENE of ferocious hand-to-hand fighting along the city walls as waves of TURKS swarm up ladders and over the battlements and attack the DEFENDERS.

CUT TO:

SALLY who is looking at the BARON, skeptically.

CUT TO:

THE FOUR HEADS on stage.

THE FOUR HEADS
(singing)
Too much remembering, too much remembering spoils your day.
Too much remembering, too much remembering turns you grey.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THE FOUR HEADS (CONT.)
It's nice to remember ...
(etc.)

CUT TO:

A WIDE SHOT of the top table where the KING and his GUESTS are all laughing and knocking back huge goblets of wine filled from an enormous punch bowl in the center of the table.

ANGLE ON the BARON and SALLY who are trying to cope with giant bowls of mushroom soup which have labels floating in them saying "soup." SALLY has relaxed and is now enjoying herself.

ARIADNE (V.O.)
(sexily)
Baron!

The BARON and SALLY look up form their soup.

BARON
Ariadne!

ANGLE ON ARIADNE as she sits down in the vacant place next to the BARON. She is very beautiful, extremely sexy, is wearing a coronet and a low cut dress and is gigantic.

ARIADNE
How thrilling.

BARON
(bowing)
Your majesty. The pleasure is all mine.

SALLY, jealous and impatient, clears her throat noisily. The BARON introduces her to ARIADNE.

BARON
Sally ... Sally Salt ... Queen Ariadne.

At this point the BARON, SALLY and ARIADNE are distracted by a loud burst of laughter and cheers from further up the table.

ANGLE ON the KING and his GUESTS who we see are all laughing at the PRIME MINISTER who is clearly very drunk.

PRIME MINISTER
(drunk)
An astronomer chappie called Smith
Thought the man in the moon was a myth.
But while seeking the truth
He fell off the roof
Broke his neck and was buried forthwith.
(with apologies to M. Palin)

The PRIME MINISTER's head falls off his shoulders and into the punch bowl. The KING and his GUESTS fall about at the sight of the drunken PRIME MINISTER's head scooting around the punch bowl, choking and spitting out fountains of wine. A couple of SERVANTS fish out the half-drowned head and set it on the table.

ANGLE ON the KING as he raises his glass in salute to the BARON.

ANGLE ON the BARON as he attempts to return the KING's salute with his giant goblet of wine. He has to climb onto the table in order to pick up the glass. The BARON manages, with difficulty, to return the KING's salute, but soaks himself with wine in the process.

ANGLE ON the KING and his GUESTS who are laughing at the BARON and enjoying the show he's providing with the giant goblet.

ANGLE ON the soaked BARON as he bows to the king. SALLY laughs.

ANGLE ON ARIADNE as she dips a finger in the puddle of spilt wine and slowly licks it off her finger. She smiles seductively at the BARON. She then picks a few grapes from one of the platters and, while maintaining eye contact with the BARON, eats them lasciviously. She then flicks a grape to the BARON.

ANGLE ON the BARON as he catches the grapes from ARIADNE. He tries to bite into it but can't break the skin with his teeth. The BARON then climbs onto the table again and attempts to cut open the grape with his giant knife. This doesn't work either. He looks towards ARIADNE and smiles.

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON ARIADNE as she continues to eat grapes and look meaningfully at the BARON.

ANGLE ON the BARON as he gives up trying to break into his grape with the unwieldy giant knife, and begins stamping on it. This rapidly leads him to showing off his soccer skills and expertly juggling the grape with his feet, and keeping it in the air.

ANGLE ON ARIADNE who is delighted with the BARON's impressive performance.

ANGLE ON SALLY who looks disgusted. She throws down her giant fork. This causes the BARON to momentarily lose his concentration, and accidentally kick the grape towards ARIADNE.

ANGLE ON ARIADNE as the grape shoots towards her and disappears into her cleavage.

ANGLE ON the BARON and SALLY. SALLY buries her face in her hands with shame, and the BARON rushes towards ARIADNE to retrieve the grape.

ANGLE ON ARIADNE as the BARON dives into her cleavage in pursuit of the grape. After a struggle, which ARIADNE enjoys quite a lot, the triumphant BARON emerges from between her breasts with the grape between his teeth. The BARON is very pleased with himself, but ARIADNE suddenly sees something beyond him and is frightened.

THE CAMERA pulls back to reveal the KING'S HEAD hovering behind the BARON. The KING is seething with jealousy and anger. The BARON fails to notice him for a moment until he sees SALLY trying to signal a warning, and becomes aware of ARIADNE's expression and the fact that the banqueting hall has become silent. At last the BARON turns to the KING.

KING
Now I remember! ... You tried to steal my queen the last time you were here!

INT. CAGE IN CELL MOON DAY

The BARON and SALLY are in a large cage (about the size of a giant's head), suspended, high up, from a hook in a wall. There are a couple of empty cages next to theirs.

(CONTINUED)

SALLY
(furious)
How stupid!

BARON
If you hadn't distracted me, I wouldn't have kicked that grape ...

SALLY
You shouldn't have flirted with her in the first place!

BARON
I was merely being polite.

SALLY
We've got to escape before the eclipse! ... If we do forget everything ...

PRIME MINISTER (V.O.)
Don't worry about a thing ...

The BARON and SALLY look across the cell to another wall.

CUT TO:

A WIDE SHOT of the cell. We see that there are dozens of cages hung around the walls and that many of them contain the heads of PRISONERS. The PRISONERS' bodies are chained to the walls and floor beneath the cages. The PRIME MINISTER's head is in one of the cages.

PRIME MINISTER
Once you've forgotten ... you've forgotten. It's very soothing.

SALLY
How can we get out of here?

PRIME MINISTER
No need. We'll be in the eclipse in a moment.

He nods towards a window through which can be seen the approaching shadow of the eclipse sweeping across the buildings of the palace.

PRIME MINISTER
After that ... no responsibilities, no
(MORE)

PRIME MINISTER (CONT.)
worries, no guilt, no hangover ... a clean slate. You'll be very happy.

SALLY
We don't want to forget!

PRIME MINISTER
If you take my advice ...

At this point the shadow of the eclipse falls through the window and onto the PRIME MINISTER.

PRIME MINISTER
Hup! ...
(mumbling blissfully)
Who? ... Where? ... I? ... You? ... Why? ... Who I? ... Where I? ... Where who? ... Who I? ... What why? ... Why what? ...
(etc.)

ANGLE ON the BARON and SALLY.

SALLY
Come on! If we climb along here, we can jump down onto one of those bodies.

The BARON is irritated by SALLY taking over and bossing him about. SALLY slips through the bars of the cage, and steps across the void into the next cage. The BARON, who has some difficulty squeezing between the bars, follows her. This new cage is littered with giant straw, and the BARON steps into a pile of it as he enters.

VOICE
(from under the straw)
Ow!

The BARON springs away and draws his saber.

BARON
Come out! ... Come out of there, whoever you are!

Since nothing happens, the BARON prods the straw with

his saber.

VOICE
Ow! Stop that!

An OLD MAN with a long white beard and hair stands up from under the straw.

OLD MAN
(indignant)
What'd you do that for?!!!

BARON
I'm sorry, I thought you might be unfriendly.

OLD MAN
Of course I'm unfriendly! You'd be unfriendly if I prodded you!

SALLY
Who are you?

OLD MAN
(thinks)
Hang on! I used to have a label here somewhere ...

The OLD MAN begins to rummage in the straw in search of his label.

OLD MAN
(finding label)
Here we are.
(showing label to SALLY)
What's it say?

SALLY
(reading)
"Label."

SALLY
(upset, to the BARON)
We'll be like him if we don't escape!

BARON
Why are you in here?

OLD MAN
I'm a very wicked criminal.

SALLY
What have you done?

OLD MAN
I can't remember.

SALLY
Then how do you know you're very wicked?

OLD MAN
Well, for one thing ... I'm in here. And for another ... I've got these shackles on.

The OLD MAN steps out of the straw dragging shackles with him. These are in fact BERTHOLD's weights.

BARON
(excited)
Berthold!!!

BERTHOLD
(for it is he)
Eh?

BARON
(to SALLY)
It's Berthold!!!

The BARON leaps forward and embraces BERTHOLD. (BERTHOLD is played, once again, by DESMOND from Salt's theater company, but this time not in heavy theatrical make-up. In other words he is more "real" as BERTHOLD than he was in the Sultan's Tale. He is also much older.)

BARON
Berthold! It's me! ... The Baron! I knew I'd find you on the moon! We've come to take you back to earth!

BERTHOLD tries to fight off the BARON's embraces.

BERTHOLD
Get off! ... Get off me! ...

BARON
You're Berthold, Berthold my old servant. Those leg irons are to slow you down ... Stop you tearing off all over the place ...

BERTHOLD
You must be joking.

BARON
You always wore them ... Remember?

BERTHOLD
You're crackers.

BARON
I'm Baron Munchausen.

BERTHOLD
That sounds nasty. Is it contagious?

SALLY
We're wasting time! The shadow's getting closer!

At this point we hear the sound of a key turning in the cell door lock.

BERTHOLD
The jailer! Get down! He's a brute!

BERTHOLD dives under giant straw. The BARON and SALLY crouch down on the floor of the cage.

CUT TO:

THE BARON AND SALLY's P.O.V. of the cell door as it creaks slowly open. After a moment, ARIADNE's detached head hovers in.

BARON
(delighted)
Ariadne?

ARIADNE
(sotto voce)
Shhh! We mustn't alert the guards!

ARIADNE'S head zooms up the cage.

ARIADNE
Darling Baron ... You're much too handsome to languish in jail ...

BARON
Where's the king?

ARIADNE
He's in bed with my body
(orgasmic)
Ooooh ... Stop it! ... But if he discovers that my head's with you ... Ahhh ... Quickly, climb into my hair! Oooooaaahh! Ooooaaaeee!

ARIADNE positions her head against the bars of the cage.

SALLY
(aside to BARON)
Why is she making those funny noises?

BARON
(embarrassed)
Her body's with the King and ... he's tickling her feet.
(turning quickly to BERTHOLD)
Berthold!

The BARON drags BERTHOLD out of the pile of giant straw.

BARON
Come on!

BERTHOLD
(struggling)
Let go of me! ...

BARON
You're coming with us.

BERTHOLD
No chance!

BARON
Why not?

BERTHOLD
(thinks)
Can't remember.

CONTINUED:

BARON
You're not frightened are you?

BERTHOLD
That's it!

BARON
(to SALLY)
Help me.

The BARON and SALLY bundle the struggling BERTHOLD through the bars of the cage and onto ARIADNE's head, where they all cling on to her hair.

CUT TO:

A WIDE SHOT of the cell as ARIADNE's head zips down from the cage and out through the door. As this happens, those giant PRISONERS in the cell who haven't yet been eclipsed become aware of the fact that an escape is taking place and begin shouting.

GIANT PRISONERS
Hey, what about us? Take us with you!
Don't go without us! They're escaping!
(etc.)

INT. PASSAGE OUTSIDE CELL MOON DAY

Outside the giant cell door as ARIADNE's head, with the BARON and CO. in her hair, zips out into the passage. A second later, a giant JAILER's head comes out of the guard room at the far end of the passage.

JAILER'S HEAD
What's going on down there!

The JAILER's head turns and whistles back into the guard room.

JAILER'S HEAD
(whistles)

The JAILER's head then rockets down the passage, towards the cell. A moment later, his body races out of the guard room in hot pursuit of the head. The body catches up with the head and joins it just in time for them to run into the cell as one.

INT. CELLS MOON DAY

The JAILER halts inside the door.

JAILER
Who opened this door?

Through the door behind him we see ARIADNE's head dart across the opening. The door slams shut.

INT. PASSAGE OUTSIDE CELL MOON DAY

ARIADNE'S head turns the key with her teeth. This action nearly dislodges the BARON and CO. From inside the cell the JAILER hammers on the door and shouts, as ARIADNE's head with the BARON and CO. on board zooms off down the passage.

INT. STONE PASSAGES IN PALACE MOON DAY

ANGLE ON ARIADNE's head with the BARON and CO. on it as she zooms along a series of stone passages.

ARIADNE
I'll take you to the Cheddar Gate ...
You can get out there ... after that
you're on your ownnnnnnnnoooaaaaaaaa!

ARIADNE's head reaches a junction in the passages and turns a corner. Here she finds herself in a passage along which the eclipse shadow is approaching. A couple of headless BODIES, limbs akimbo, rush wildly past. The area already in shadow is full of inert BODIES and even more inert HEADS.

HEADS
(blissfully)
I? ... What? ... Where? ... Where I?
... Am I? ... Am what? ... Who is? ...
What where? ...

ARIADNE
The eclipse! ... Ooooooooh? ... We'll
have to go another way!

ARIADNE's head turns and runs straight into the chest of a giant GUARD. The GUARD tries to grab hold of her but she ducks and weaves her way past him. The GUARD

(CONTINUED)

plus two other GUARDS chase after her.

INT. STONE PASSAGES IN PALACE MOON

ANGLE ON the three GUARDS as they charge around a corner. The LEADER trips over something and falls to the ground.

IAN
(falling)
Ow! Shit!

The two other GUARDS stop to help him up, and we see that he has tripped over a giant marble head.

ROBERT
You all right?

IAN
(angry)
No!

ARIADNE (V.O.)
Oooooooaaa!

IAN
What's that?

We now see that the GUARDS are standing in a corridor full of pieces of giant marble statues of moon-people; heads, hands, feet, etc. Behind them is a stack of upside down statues, some of whose heads are close to and on a level with the GUARDS' heads. As the GUARDS pause to listen, we PAN IN to discover that the head of one of these statues is missing and that its place has been taken by ARIADNE's head which is hovering upside down in the hope of being mistaken for part of the statue. The BARON and CO. are hiding behind her.

ARIADNE
Mnnnnoaahh!

The BARON, SALLY and BERTHOLD exchange fearful looks.

IAN
There it is again.

The BARON hurriedly removes his jacket, and, risking being seen, stuffs if as quickly as possible into

ARIADNE's mouth before returning to cover.

The GUARDS listen for a moment.

ROBERT
I can't hear anything.

IAN
Sshh!

ARIADNE is straining to explode, but the BARON's coat is just about keeping her quiet. The BARON, SALLY and BERTHOLD watch her anxiously.

FRANK
(fed up)
They've gone. They're miles away by now. What's the point of chasing them anyway?

ROBERT
Right ... We're gonna forget everything in five minutes.

IAN
That's why I want to catch 'em, stupid! Do something *really* nasty what's worth forgetting.
(moving off)
Come on!

The GUARDS run off. The BARON and CO. emerge from behind ARIADNE just in time for her to explode and blow the BARON's coat out of her mouth at the BARON.

EXT. CLOISTERS ON MOON DAY

ARIADNE's head, the BARON, SALLY and BERTHOLD enter a giant unfinished cloister. A giant headless BODY is gambolling on the grass in the middle of the quadrangle, leaping about, rolling over, and doing silly things.

ARIADNE
Oooooaaaaahh ... ! I must leave you.
(nodding towards the other side of the quad)
The Cheddar Gate's over there.
(MORE)

ARIADNE (CONT.)
(suddenly passionate)
Oh Baron ... Darling ... take me with you.

BARON
(taken aback)
My dear ... Back to earth?

ARIADNE
Yes.

BARON
Er ... Without your body?

ARIADNE
(hurt)
I thought you loved me for myself?

BARON
Oh I did, I do, of course I do.

SALLY
(sick of this)
We've got to go!

ARIADNE
No, you're right, it's impossible ... It was just a mad thought ... Here. Take a lock of my hair.

The BARON takes out his saber and cuts a 6-foot lock of ARIADNE's hair which he ties around his neck like a long scarf.

BERTHOLD
Just a lock cocky! Not the whole carpet!

BARON
I shall treasure it, always.

ARIADNE
Ooooooooh ... ! Aaaaaaaaaaaah ...! The king's ... Haaaaaaaaaaaaa ... ! I must go back ... OOOOOOOOOH ...! Au revoir dear Baron ... AAAAAAH ... ! I hope we'll meet again ... OO, OO, OO, OO, AAH! Good luck! AAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

The BARON plucks a red paper rose from inside his jacket and puts it between ARIADNE's teeth.

ARIADNE's head shoots off around the quadrangle, out of sight.

ARIADNE
I'm coming Roger ... I'm coming ...
OOOOOOOOOOAAAAAAAAAOOOOOOOOOO ... !

EXT. CHEDDAR GATE MOON DAY

The BARON, SALLY and BERTHOLD arrive at an impressive portal one side of the cloistered quadrangle. This leads out to the open moon, a vast desert space littered with unfinished buildings. Behind the BARON and CO., in the middle of the quadrangle, the giant headless BODY continues to frolic. A giant female HEAD, set in the top of the arch of the portal, sees the BARON and CO.

PORTAL HEAD
Three escaped prisoners at the Cheddar Gate! ... Three escaped prisoners ...
(etc.)

The BARON and CO. look around, panic stricken. Bells begin to ring.

BARON
This way! And don't run into the shade!

The BARON and CO. look around, panic stricken. Bells begin to ring.

INT. THE KING'S BEDROOM MOON DAY

ANGLE ON the KING, who is tickling the QUEEN's feet. The QUEEN's body is writhing under the bedclothes. The voice of the PORTAL HEAD blasts through the window.

PORTAL HEAD
... The Cheddar Gate ... Three escaped prisoners at the Cheddar Gate.

The KING lifts the bedclothes from the top of the QUEEN's body to discover that her head is missing.

CONTINUED:

KING'S HEAD
(furious)
I wondered why you were so quiet! ...
Your damned head's with the Baron,
isn't it?!!! ... I'll kill him!!! ...
(shouting out of the
bedroom door)
Saddle my griffin!!!

EXT. MOONSCAPE ON VERGE OF ECLIPSE

ANGLE ON the BARON and CO. as they struggle across the moon, away from the palace, past abandoned, half-finished buildings and structures. We hear the blast of a distant hunting horn. The BARON and CO. look back towards the direction of the palace.

CUT TO:

THE BARON AND CO.'S P.O.V. where we see, hovering over the palace, a mounted THREE-HEADED GRIFFIN.

CUT TO:

A CLOSE-UP of the GRIFFIN which we discover is being ridden by the KING, armed with a mushroom shield and asparagus spear.

KING
(steadying the
griffin)
Hungry are we, Silver? Go get 'em!

The KING spurs the GRIFFIN, which roars, rears back and then zooms away with much snarling of flared nostrils and beating of wings.